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LORENA RIZZO

Introduction by Patricia Hayes

Gender and Colonialism

A History of Kaoko in north-western Namibia,
1870s–1950s

Basel Namibia Studies Series 14

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Less is more? History and the Kaoko

An introduction

The force of residual histories that are delineated in this new work on Kaoko, and the uniqueness of their scale, open up specific new horizons on Namibia and the subcontinent. In this preface, I wish to comment briefly on the many enjoyments produced by this new sense of history and its parallel methodological moves.

This region, whose naming Lorena Rizzo turns into a colonial problematic, has been inhabited and passed through by numerous populations. These processes have left fragmented histories and indeed very fractured archives. While many have passed through, and those who resided there dwelt only in pockets or on the move, this supposedly isolated region has mostly been passed over by many scholars. But in some ways it holds the key to unfinished debates from other parts of Namibia and indeed the entire length of the south-western coast of Africa. Why? In line with the tropes of the 'last frontier' (coined by popular author Negley Farson), and of the 'lonely outpost of empire' (the Resident Commissioner Manning's phrase) where time 'stood still', processes and temporalities which had run their course elsewhere or been violently interrupted by the two colonialisms endured by the territory, tended to keep going in this remote north-western part of Namibia.

The Kaoko region with its fragile ecology and relatively open frontiers extends a variety of histories, that we possibly imagined had been concluded elsewhere. For instance, Rizzo's study takes the arguments of the late Brigitte Lau on the Oorlams into a completely new dimension, given that two offshoots of the Oorlams settled in Kaoko and have not previously been subject to close historical scrutiny. This story of dynamic militarised, hybridised black groups who lived out the idiom of the 'boer' commando did not end with the histories of the Namibian south which have received considerable attention elsewhere.¹ The early part of this book therefore takes up an unfinished story, which is also part of a much bigger southern African story about the impact of merchant capital on the subcontinent. Joseph Miller's monumental work on Angola, and a host of historians in South Africa who debated the origins and aftermath of the 'mfecane',² have all engaged with questions around commoditi-

¹ See for example Brigitte Lau, *South and central Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner's time* (Windhoek: National Archives, 1987); Jeremy Silvester, 'Black pastoralists, white farmers: the dynamics of land dispossession and labour recruitment in southern Namibia, 1915–1955' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1993); Tilman Dederig, *Hate the Old and Follow the New: Khoekhoe and missionaries in early 19th century Namibia* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997).

² Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: merchant capitalism and the Angolan slave trade, 1730–1830* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1988); Carolyn Hamilton (ed), *The Mfecane aftermath: reconstructive debates in Southern African history* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press &

sation and the political and socio-economic shifts it engendered, and for many years it has seemed as if there was nothing left to say. This is not so. Rizzo takes us squarely back into these issues, and it must be said that very few scholars have posed such penetrating questions about the ensuing militarization and masculinisation as she does here. The promise of this new history is that it extends the field of social history not only geographically, but also with the additional tools of a cultural turn in the analysis of southern Africa.

Aside from the Oorlams sequel, this research provides another set of insights into South African colonial rule. Those of us who have worked on the central Owambo floodplain with its centralised kingdoms have often been criticised for not taking more account of the less centralised societies to the west, which is the less obvious terrain Rizzo deals with, both historically and archivally. What I found fascinating in this analysis is the detailed exploration of a hitherto silent chapter of the parallel work done by a native administration based in Owambo, in a more chequered form here in the Kaoko. In eastern Owambo with its sedentary kingdoms and relatively stable genealogies the script of indirect rule virtually wrote itself for these officers, so their perplexity, their frustration, their ad hoc solutions and arrogance towards smaller units of society, is very revealing.

The Resident Commissioner Manning had fantasies of following in Francis Galton's footsteps as an explorer and geographer, but his lack of capacity to grasp the nature of long-standing disputes between Vita Tom and Muhona Katiti suggests he had no other tools than banal preconception. The Anglophone elite pushing for *Pax South Africana* could not grasp the nitty-gritty nature of the relationships of survival in a landscape they only wanted to romanticise as white protagonists. The hybrid ways in which Africans adopted merchant capital dynamics and continued with these into the colonial era were often unintelligible to senior officials, who dealt with them simply under the terse and denigrating rubric of smuggling. In a similar way the efforts of people to maintain a pastoral or foraging economy by remaining outside the four reserves set up in Kaoko, and being ominously designated as squatters, suggests the deepening economic and discursive marginalisation of these groups under indirect rule and segregation. Thus we have an expansion of our understanding of the workings of this system in the north, not confined to the 'show tribes' of the Owambo floodplain but including Kaoko's disappointing chiefs and motley subjects off the radar. It suggests as nowhere else that the formula of indirect rule, as fed to the League of Nations, was a somewhat hollow claim and perhaps lazily recycled in reports. It also strengthens Rizzo's critique of the ethnic bias in the organisation of the colonial archives, and the way many historians might have reproduced this.

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press: 1995).

Another unfamiliar glimpse we receive in this study is the relationship between settler and African farmers, along the seam of the Police Zone and the northern reserve system. Because the latter leads to the frontier with Angola and offered possibilities of interaction beyond those elsewhere in Namibia, a different kind of narrative seems to open up in Outjo that is not one of simple racism, brutality and exploitation. Hunting and especially the lending of stock to reserve residents suggest histories of negotiation and at times even co-dependence. This blurring of boundaries in practice points to the importance of close detailed research that does not simply rely on following the organisational principles and categories of the official archive.

Some readers might ask why so much labour has been put into a region that is demographically less important in Namibia and elsewhere, a huge region populated by a few thousand souls (though interestingly the figures always appear to be guesswork by officials). This is what I am calling its uniqueness of scale. Rizzo's Kaoko history does something productive with this on multiple fronts. There are various lenses through which to look at bigger processes in Namibian historiography from different angles and intensities, which plainly unsettle a range of existing conclusions and assumptions. Perhaps those conclusions were reached prematurely as a result of the compartmentalisations of the colonial archive, as Rizzo argues in her introduction, or perhaps models from South African historiography have also permeated too strongly. But to go back to Outjo, and the definitive moment when animal disease finally provides the pretext for disentangling people from different groups who were entangled through economic interest, the conjuncture of human and animal issues in a modernising stock economy is another moment of originality in this work. A striking and disturbing feature is the overwhelming evidence that long before the Odendaal Plan under apartheid, the South African government was determined to pry people apart spatially and control them according to certain priorities. It appears very naked here, making this northern reserve area resemble southern reserves in the Police Zone more closely, when ostensibly they were supposed to operate under different systems.

In fact Rizzo's work seems to revolve around a clear project of colonial disentanglement as it affects the Kaoko. The lineaments are conveyed in fine detail. The concept is a felicitous one, given that so much history of Kaoko and its environs is explicable through the entanglements of the mercantile and mobile eras that preceded colonial occupation. In fact, a great deal of colonialism here seems to be about undoing earlier modernities and instating another form of the modern that is highly stratified.

The category of gender is foregrounded in the title and addressed across the chapters. But the question splinters into many parts. This seems to be the fate of many big analytical categories in this 'lonely outpost of empire'. There are many rich empirical and even

methodological insights but interestingly not quite that sense of an overarching conceptual or theoretical argument that would conclusively suggest that gender and colonialism were necessary to each other, and perhaps mutually constitutive, as the title infers. Or perhaps, no more so than any other category. To my mind, this provokes very interesting questions. Are the gender questions and the category itself, arising as they do from certain intellectual and historical positionalities (such as 'modern' western feminism), appropriate to this research project, whose starting point is the critique of the colonial archive? If not, what approach to gender would be? How is gender entangled in Kaoko lives and the forces that impinged on them? Or is gender part of the ongoing project of colonial disentanglement – if not, how does it fracture that project? And where are the points of fracture? This is where the 'lonely outpost' space with its exceptionalities, irrationalities and indiscipline, and their splintering effect on colonial mega-narratives and given concepts, can be used to great effect.

On a more empirical level, finding archival material on women in Kaoko was tremendously difficult for a variety of familiar androcentric reasons. Rizzo uses oral accounts critically and imaginatively, and generating these could not have been easy. When it is not apparent to outside researchers what events are memorable when people move around in a marginal environment, and when women are not socially encouraged to be the speakers about the past, then the material Rizzo brings into her text must have been very dearly-earned. Indeed, the sensitisation to gender issues she brings in several chapters, out of very unpromising and seemingly unimportant material, is often impressive. Here I am thinking of the social reproductive role of women that enabled them to follow genealogical imperatives and connect with other regions for weddings and funerals, which in turn might have facilitated other transactions. This allows her to make an important argument that these informal movements are parallel to the more dominant and formal notion of labour migration, and suggest greater propensities of mobility than would otherwise appear to be the case.

The work with photographs presents further analytic and methodological openings and possibilities. Some radically fresh angles arise from Rizzo's reading of photographs, and her reconstruction of the photographic encounters themselves. These offer microviews of colonial relationships, especially the three-way negotiations between white men, African men and African women. Rizzo also hints at a notion of women's poetics, in the always already impossible task of finding 'voice'. Where Rizzo really breaks new ground however is with her questions around law and visuality, whose salience is not confined to Namibian historiography.

The work presented here is an excellent sample of what can be accomplished by splicing different mediums, genres, traces and even senses in the attempt to convey a multi-faceted

history of a region that has only recently been tied into a national historiography.³ Lorena Rizzo has combed minutely through almost every possible written documentary source, then asked questions on the basis of this documentation of her oral and visual sources, and vice versa. She has done this in a huge but demographically marginal area of Namibia, and read them in ways that allow for some very productive frictions. Thus, as I have suggested in the beginning of this preface, she has closely calibrated the processes for which elsewhere we have only snapshots and a lingering suspicion that we have left something out.

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February 2012

³ See for example Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester, Marion Wallace and Wolfram Hartmann (eds), *Namibia under South African rule: mobility and containment, 1915–46* (London: James Currey, 1998); Marion Wallace with John Kinanhan: *A history of Namibia. From the beginning to 1990* (Auckland Park: Jakana, 2011).



Map of northern Namibia.

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Introduction

*"Ohopoho is surely the loneliest outpost in a country where lonely outposts are the rule, and the post of officer-in-charge must be a very difficult one to fill."*¹

Images of lonely outposts, of remote and empty wildernesses sparsely populated by lonely men, pioneers of modernity who secure the frontier of an advancing civilization, are a common feature in the colonial imagination about conquered territories in Africa as much as in the Americas.² In 1948 Opuwo was the administrative centre of the Kaokoveld reserve, situated some 800 kilometres from Windhoek and part of a series of places all over colonial Namibia that Cleaver, the South African officer quoted, was commissioned to inspect. The north-western outpost, manned by an officer in charge of native affairs and a few European and African policemen scattered all over the area along the northern Kunene River or at the southern police posts, symbolically represented the colonial state on the ground. As such, Opuwo indeed seemed the most remote marker of South African presence in a country, which in the post World War II era, was considered to be peripheral in terms of colonial administrative structures from the perspective of the South African heartland. But, and this is key for the following analysis and interpretation of the history of Kaoko, the perception and qualification of Opuwo as the loneliest outpost in a country *characterized* by lonely outposts is an expression of a specific colonial and, eventually, archival narrative about the north-western Namibian region. What by 1948 might have appeared to some contemporaries as an almost natural condition – the vision of a timeless and remote space – was the result of a long process of colonial expansion and appropriation which took its specific shape and colour through an enduring, often problematic and, at times, violent encounter between two colonial powers, i.e. the German and the South African administration and the region's African population. Kaoko's position on the periphery, its marginality within a colonial topography of power emerging throughout the second half of the 19th century and

¹ SWAA 1303 A 184/26/1, Public Service Inspection Report, Opuwo Native Affairs Office, Kaokoveld, 1948, Public Service Inspector, Cleaver, to the SWA Native Affairs Department, Pretoria, 20. July 1948.

² For the Americas see e.g. Sluyter, A. (2002), "Colonialism and Landscape in the Americas: material/conceptual transformations and continuing consequences". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 91, No. 2: pp. 410–428. For Africa see e.g. Cooper, F. & Stoler, A.L. (1997), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Berkeley; also the introduction to Grosz-Ngaté, M. & Kokole, O. H. (1997), *Gendered encounters. Challenging cultural boundaries and social hierarchies in Africa*. New York and London.

solidified by the early 20th century, significantly framed the socio-economic and political transformations that concern us here. This is not to say that the following analysis is committed to a rigid model of colonial centres and peripheries, nor do I suggest any imperative implication of such a model.³ Rather, this history of Kaoko is an attempt to investigate how marginality is and was in itself a position of power⁴ or, at least, a dynamic site where power relations and constellations came to the fore and remained contested.

This analysis begs the need to scrutinize the constitution and genesis of an African region as a historical space and throughout the thesis this issue will be repeatedly addressed. In general terms, it also raises the question of our handling of Kaoko as a dynamic research unit, as the object and subject of historical analysis. Readers might expect a listing of criteria and ingredients, which in an ethno-regional history help delimitate the subject of inquiry: topography and vegetation, economic, social and political organization, and some statistical and demographic data. Due to the historical contingency of such information, however, I have chosen not to include a general description of “land and people” in the introduction. Instead I have decided to discuss the natural and human environments throughout the chapters whenever they become relevant to the processes described. In the aftermath of Namibia’s independence in 1990, the area demarcated as Kaoko became part of the Kunene region. This new administrative entity purposefully merged those parts of the north-western territory that, throughout South African colonial rule, had repeatedly been divided or set apart, temporarily or continuously: the commercial farming areas in the Outjo district, the border areas between colonial Kaoko, Owambo and the Etosha National Park, the former Kaoko reserve itself, parts of colonial Damaraland and former buffer and cleared zones.⁵

There have been various attempts to define Kaoko as a specific and separate space and arguments have relied on different narratives, including archival evidence, oral information, ethnic paradigms, geographical concepts and political discourse.⁶ Oral knowledge explains

³ For an introduction to the model of centre-periphery and its scientific genesis see McKenzie, N. (1977), “Centre & Periphery. The Marriage of Two Minds”. *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 20, No. 1: 55–74. For a recent application of the model see Sapper, M. et al. (2008), “Transfargeschichte(n): Peripherie und Zentrum in Europa”. *Osteuropa*, 58, Vol. 3: 117–24.

⁴ See Bryce, J. (1997), “Review of ‘Power Marginality and African Oral Literature’”. Edited by Furniss, G. & Gunner, L. *African Affairs*, Vol. 96, No. 383: 284–286.

⁵ The declaration of new districts and regions was done in 1992. For a general discussion see Miescher, G. (1997), *Epupa, Kaoko, Namibia. Analyse einer öffentlichen Debatte im postkolonialen Namibia. Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten kolonialer Konzeptionen*. MA thesis. Basel.

⁶ Michael Bollig’s work has been central here, although Bollig’s definition of Kaoko as a geographical and socio-political space was much more cautious and differentiated than, as we shall see, its simplistic reception by younger scholars might suggest. See Bollig, M. (1999), *Risk Management in a Hazardous Environment. A Comparative Study of Two Pastoral Societies* (Pokot NW Kenya and Himba NW Namibia). Köln, pp. 72ff.

the term Kaoko as generally referring to the area on the left bank of the Kunene River,⁷ a description which accounts for the importance of anchoring claims to a specific area and to a historical continuity of residence and land use, whilst using a certain territorial vagueness as a strategic narrative element, not least with regard to Kaoko's extension in what is today north-western Namibia. Within the colonial discourse, there is a certain continuity in the use of the term Kaoko and its variants designating a region, roughly speaking bordering the Atlantic ocean in the west and extending between the Ugab River in the south, the Etosha pan and the former Owambo kingdoms in the east and the Angolan territory in the north. When W.C. Palgrave, special emissary to South West Africa, visited various political dignitaries in central Namibia in the 1870s and 1880s, Herero leaders in Omaruru, as well as representatives of the Swartbooi leadership in Fransfontein, claimed authority over an area they named Kaoko, which basically encompassed the north-western highlands and the mountainous area reaching (at least) to the northern Kunene River. With the advent of German colonialism in 1884, the narrative thickened around an idea of a *Kaokofeld*, an area noticeably shrinking northwards as the commercial and, to a lesser extent, the political ambitions of the German settler society expanded. As we shall see, the Kaoko Land and Mining Company, a private prospecting enterprise, played an important role in this. After World War I and the administrative take-over by the South African military and, later, civil administration, the territoriality of Kaoko entered a process of constant renegotiation and redefinition. *Kaokoveld*, the term increasingly used since the mid 1920s, was progressively subjected to the requirements and necessities of a colonial administration that was, as we shall see, desperate to create and enforce stable territories and eventually to define contingent reserves. The demarcation of a Kaokoveld reserve in the late 1920s (a theory rather than a reality) and the definition of a Kaokoveld district in the late 1930s became nodal points in the long and fractured genesis of a northern Namibian colonial territory. In other words, the region's history was not so much determined by the existence of a clear, static territoriality based on a particular geography, ethnicity or political unity. The approach taken here considers the dynamics of Kaoko's instability and its shifting materiality as a territory and socio-political space to be meaningful. Hence, rather than reading and interpreting this fluidity as a conceptual problem, I have interpreted it as a characteristic feature of the history of the north-western part of Namibia, and all chapters try to convey the fluctuations of these dynamics. My approach eventually challenges the emergence of *Kaokoland* as a surprisingly tenacious designation, which was increasingly used since the late 1960s and notoriously survived into the post-independence era. Originating in a territorial grand-

⁷ E.g. interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001. See also Bollig, M. (1997), 'When War Came the Cattle Slept...'. *Himba Oral Traditions*. Köln.

plan suggested by the Odendaal Commission in 1964,⁸ the term referred to a north-western homeland which, ironically perhaps, never became a reality.⁹

Space and Ethnicity – Kaoko as “the land of the Ovahimba and Ovaherero”

Writing about Kaoko’s history is very often conceived of as writing a history of one of those areas in Namibia which is almost compulsively associated with “the Ovaherero” and, in particular, with “the Ovahimba”. Ethnicity and the historical constitution of ethnic or tribal identity have been prominent issues in African history and African studies in general, and many scholars have developed critical approaches in order to account for the complexities of the emergence of ethnic discourses in late 19th century Africa.¹⁰ Kaoko’s history is part of Namibia’s colonial history and, as such, discourses of tribalism and of ethnicity play their part. Their emergence was influenced by the experience of German colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and later by South African colonialism, segregation, and its transformation into apartheid after World War II. The current perception of Kaoko as being the “land of the Ovahimba and Ovaherero”¹¹ is, of course, the result of this historical discourse and of the specific historical constellations, which eventually linked the region as a colonial space to a particular form and occurrence of ethnic identity. But, as this thesis is decidedly not an ethnic history, it is not committed to reconstruct the ethnogenesis of an Ovaherero and Ovahimba society of Kaoko.¹² In fact, it is very much concerned with avoiding the reproduction of a colonial narrative in which space and ethnic identity are so deeply ingrained with each other. What this thesis does reflect on and explore is the development and constitution of a colonial society. It reconstructs aspects of the social,

⁸ Republic of South Africa. (1964), *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into South West Africa Affairs, 1962–1963*. (Odendaal Report). Pretoria.

⁹ Kaokoland is a terminological and cartographic entity used since the early 1970s, an instance which might explain the confusion. But, the area never attained the status of a homeland.

¹⁰ See e.g. Vail, L. (2005), *The creation of tribalism in Southern Africa*. Oxford; Kalu, K. A. (2001), *Ethnicity and political economy of Africa: a conceptual analysis*. Aldershot; Davison, J. (1997), *Gender, lineage and ethnicity in southern Africa*. Boulder; Harries, P. (1988), “The Roots of Ethnicity: discourse and the politics of language in south-eastern Africa”. *African Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 346: 25–52.

¹¹ This is most evidently the case in popular and pseudo-scientific perceptions and representations of the north-western region. But beyond that it is a bias, which is as much reproduced and enforced in scholarly work on Kaoko. See Miescher, G. & Rizzo, L. (2000), “Popular Pictorial Constructions of Kaoko in the 20th century”. In Miescher, G. & Henrichsen, D. (eds), *New Notes on Kaoko. The northern Kunene region (Namibia) in texts and photographs*. Basel.

¹² And as such it differs significantly from almost any other anthropological and historical work done on the region up to date.

political and economic transformations that the colonial experience entailed for the communities living in Kaoko between the late 19th and the mid 20th century. Most importantly, the reconstruction of these historical processes does not see ethnicity as the most useful and sensitive analytical tool needed to grasp and understand the specific historical condition or process of change in the region.¹³ As we shall see, there were specific moments in Kaoko's past when particular agents and narratives came to the fore and, indeed, initiated and sustained ongoing negotiations of ethnicity and tribal identity. Early missionary endeavours in the north-western area since the 1890s up to the mid 1910s were important in this regard, although they remained fractured and tentative compared to the southern and central regions of Namibia. Among the interventions by members of the Rhenish Mission Society, who operated in Kaoko during this period, the work of missionary Heinrich Vedder became paradigmatic for most of the later discussions on ethnicity in Kaoko. When Vedder visited the region in 1914, his *renommée* as one of the colony's most distinguished ethnographers was well established. In his report to the German colonial administration he sketched an elaborate ethnography of the region based on histories of migrations, on genealogies and on the identification of differences between the various groups. He further explained his systematization in terms of the economy, the material culture, the political organization and patterns of residence.

Vedder thus divided the population of Kaoko into three groups, namely Ovaherero proper, Ovahimba and Ovatjimba, although he insisted that the cultural unity of these groups had to be seen in terms of an over-arching Otjiherero-speaking community.¹⁴ Vedder's outline accounted for the need to create a coherent cultural space to which missionary work could be applied. The viability of involvement by the Rhenish Mission Society in the north-west was contested in the early 20th century and to conceptualize missionary work in Kaoko as a mere extension of the Herero mission, which was crucial in the colony as a whole, no doubt left an impact on Vedder's strategic argument. The classification of Kaoko as an Ovaherero area conflicted, however, with the realities on the ground. As a matter of fact, the main stronghold of missionary work in Kaoko in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was, as we shall see, Sesfontein and its Topnaar leadership. Located in the south of the region, Sesfontein had been gradually drawn into the sphere of influence of the mission, based first in Outjo, and later, in Fransfontein. These locations were part of the Rhenish Mission Society's Nama mission field.

¹³ See Brubaker, R. & Cooper, F. (2000), "Beyond 'Identity'". *Theory & Society*, Vol. 29, No. 1: 1–47.

¹⁴ NAN J XII b5, Heinrich Vedder, „Reisebericht des Missionars Heinrich Vedder an den Bezirksamtman von Zastrow.“, *Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen im Kaokoveld 1900–1914*, (1914).

Besides the missionary narratives, colonial policy and intervention was another arena where ethnicity emerged, although here the elements of the process were different. The basis for the politics of ethnicity can be traced to two reports by the first South African commissioner, Major Charles Manning, who undertook two military expeditions to the region in the late 1910s.¹⁵ But again, the analysis of Manning's ethnic narrative remains committed to analytical scrutiny, and I will try to show how the martial context of his work became meaningful to the construction or 'invention' of an ethnic constellation in Kaoko. Manning's reports resonated throughout the following two decades. Eventually, the creation of stable colonial territories and the requirement that a colonial administration needed to identify African counterparts in the implementation of indirect rule framed the particular context in which Ovaherero, Ovahimba and Ovatjimba, as well as the Topnaar leadership in Sesfontein, had to renegotiate the terms of a socio-political landscape-in-the-making.

The bias of ethnicity is, in fact, not limited to scholarly work on Kaoko. Miescher has recently discussed the emergence of a post-independence Namibian historiography committed to reconstructing the histories of those areas in the country that had remained beyond scholarly attention; be it because of the war of liberation - such as the Owambo regions - or because they had been subjected to the hegemony of a colonial and settler historiography produced inside the Southern African settler society - which mainly applies to Herero and Bushman histories.¹⁶ While Miescher acknowledges the importance and significance of this recent historiography in recovering the forgotten or deliberately suppressed experiences and perspectives of various African communities in Namibia, he rightly points to a fundamental problem shared by most of the studies produced in the 1990s: the building of post-independence Namibian historiography on a series of ethnic histories, i.e. histories of former reserves and/or homelands. As I will discuss in more detail below, the colonial archival narrative and the ways in which it has shaped the production and writing of history contributed toward this bias.

How, then, does the following reconstruction and interpretation of Kaoko's history blur the ethnic bias? Some considerations have been mentioned above regarding the necessity of transcending the borders of the former Kaoko reserve, not so much because the spatial and political limits of a reserve are so deeply rooted in colonial policies of containment, but rather for empirical reasons. Kaoko's history is characterized by the high mobility of the region's inhabitants, some of which was due to conflicts, to ecological distress - such as

¹⁵ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 15. November 1917 and NAN SWAA 2516, Report by Major C.N. Manning re 2nd Tour to Kaokoveld; Disarmament General, 25. August 1919.

¹⁶ Miescher, G. (2009), *Die Rote Linie. Die Geschichte der Veterinär- und Siedlungsgrenze in Namibia (1890er bis 1960er Jahre)*. Basel. Introduction.

droughts and famine - and to rivalries among local leaders. In contrast to Owambo, formal mobility, i.e. labour migration, played a marginal role, although it gained some significance in the interwar period and, to a certain extent, in the late 1940s. I have therefore tried to explain forms of informal mobility, the fact that African men and women moved beyond the borders of the reserves for various reasons such as weddings, funerals, inheritance, trans-regional trade, education, etc. The dynamics of these migrations blur the logic of colonial territorialities and, although archival information is very scattered, they allow us to explore the ways in which Africans undermined the restrictions imposed on them by the colonial state. Generally speaking, the following chapters introduce communities, groups, families and, at times, individuals who do not fit into Vedder's ethnography of Kaoko. Often the ethnic background of people remains unclear or, at least, ambivalent and the idea of coherent ethnic groups living in a reserve, a town or a village more often than not proved a fiction which, although suggested by the archives, nevertheless remained far from the reality. Prominent figures such as Vita Tom who emerged as a politician in Kaoko between the late 1910s and the 1930s are telling examples of how moving between the spaces – geographically, politically and culturally – became a specific strategy under colonialism. Hence, instead of excluding the ethnic “inconsistencies” and rather than writing a history, which suppresses the multiplicities and variations of social cohesion and of political affiliation, I have tried to treat these hybrids as constitutive and meaningful for some of Kaoko's historical experience.¹⁷

For this thesis, it has become crucial to develop an understanding of Kaoko's past within the framework of a northern Namibian perspective. The historical relations between various communities in Kaoko and in western Owambo made this almost compulsory. Similarly, the north-western region's entanglement with the history of central Namibia, and in the late 19th century with the Cape colony, necessarily came to attention. But there is more to this and some of the chapters raise issues of changing chronologies and of re-evaluation resulting precisely from linking the interpretation of Kaoko's past to developments in neighbouring regions. The inoculation campaigns in the late 1930s are, as we shall see below, a strong case in point. There was a serious limit to this transregional approach, due to the fact that to date there is almost no published scholarly work on south-western Angola.¹⁸ Clarence-Smith's groundbreaking study in the late 1970s remains the main reference.¹⁹ Needless to say, dividing Kaoko from the regions north of the Kunene River is an unfortunate reproduc-

¹⁷ See Kapchan, D. & Turner Strong, P. (1999), “Theorizing the Hybrid”. *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 112, No. 445: 239–253, where the authors also reflect on the question of alternative terminology, the most obvious one being syncretism.

¹⁸ Meaning in English or German.

¹⁹ Clarence-Smith, W.G. (1979), *Slaves, Peasants and Capitalists in southern Angola*. London.

tion and enforcement of a colonial separation. I have tried to include southern Angola as much as possible, but have been limited by the materials available in the Namibian archives and by oral information from Kaoko.²⁰

Beyond historiographical considerations, the methodology and the conceptual framework of the thesis will hopefully make an incisive contribution to a nuanced interpretation and representation of Kaoko's past. Written archival material has been synthesized with oral information from the region and also with visual material. I discuss the implications of the various sources below. The decision to explore and unfold the history of Kaoko through the lens of the constitution and transformation of gender relations, has been, as I will argue throughout the chapters, a valuable and, at times, challenging endeavour.

Gender and Colonialism

Gender as a topic and as an analytical category has gained growing significance in African history over the last three decades. The historiography on African women and on changing gender relations in Africa is rich, and the growing number of anthologies, regional studies and theoretical, as well as methodological contributions, reflect the widening of social histories of Africa, both in terms of subject matter and approach.²¹ From their very beginnings, feminist and women's histories of Africa have been committed to empirically recovering the lives of women, their experiences and perspectives, and restoring them to a history which was, as it has been rightly argued, uncritically reproducing and reinforcing a male bias and naturalising the predominance of men in the making of historical change and development. Conventional fields of historical research and analysis such as political, economic, labour, and military histories were questioned in terms of the roles women played in these areas, challenging the assumption that men were the main agents and authors worthy of scholarly attention.²² Hence, the feminist critique and approach aimed at both placing women in African history and engendering African history, not least in order to prevent the constitution of women and gender studies as an additional topic, as a new but marginal department of historical studies.²³

²⁰ Bollig (1997) was valuable in this context.

²¹ For a general overview of the historiography see the introduction to Oyewumi, O. (2005), *African Gender Studies. A Reader*. New York; and Ghosh, D. (2004), "Gender and Colonialism: Expansion or Marginalization?" *The Historical Journal*, 47: 737–755.

²² See Tiyaambe Zeleza, P. (2005), "Gender Biases in African Historiography". In Oyewumi (2005), pp. 207–232.

²³ Hunt, N.R. (1989), "Placing African women's history and locating Gender". *Social History*, Vol. 14, No. 3: 359–379, here p. 372. In her article Hunt discusses the importance of Joan Scott's theoretical outline of gender as a category of analysis. See Scott, J. (1986), "Gender: a useful category of

Colonialism and a focus on the colonial period have dominated the debates in African history on shifting gender relations. Implicitly it has been assumed that the colonial period and the imposition of indirect and direct systems of rule therein caused the most virulent confrontations between competing cultures of masculinity and femininity and intensified tensions within African societies, particularly in the domain of gender relations.²⁴ Theoretically, and against most conventional historiography, colonialism was conceived of as a system in which gender in fact became a crucial domain of power.²⁵ Hence, an analysis of the ways in which gender relations were changed, reconstituted and contested under colonial rule would disclose the general homogenising functions of colonialism, enforcing the perception and representation of colonial societies in terms of difference and rigid dichotomies – between colonisers and colonised, black and white, women and men, and so forth.²⁶ One of the main problems within African gender studies and history, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, was the issue of women's almost compulsory oppression, marginalisation and exploitation in most colonial contexts.²⁷ The patriarchal ideologies of colonial regimes and states and the uncanny combination with their indigenous counterparts, were identified as driving forces in the reconfiguration and eventual deterioration of women's roles and status to the advantage of colonial and colonised men.²⁸ The increased pressure on women, be it due to restrictions on their mobility, to growing control over their productive and reproductive functions, or because of increased threats to their social and physical security, is a phenomenon, which has rightly been linked to the impact of colonialism in various African contexts.²⁹ Nevertheless, many scholars of gender history have kept a critical perspective on historical specificities and have repeatedly stressed the necessity to carefully look at how, why and under which conditions the status of women, and therewith the configuration of gender relations, shifted under colonialism, and whether these transformations necessarily and always implied a deterioration of women's role in society.³⁰ Indeed, as a system and ideology of rule, colonialism often proved fragmented and fractured in its impact and effect,

historical analysis". *American Historical Review*, XCII, 1986: 1053–75.

²⁴ Tiyaambe Zeleza, (2005), p. 224.

²⁵ As remarked and discussed e.g. in the introduction to Hodgson, D. L. & McCurdy, S. (2001), *'Wicked' Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa*. Portsmouth, Oxford, Cape Town.

²⁶ See the introduction to Woodward, W., Hayes, P. & Minkley, G. (2002), *Deep histories. Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa*. New York.

²⁷ Ghosh, (2004), p. 754.

²⁸ See the introduction to Walker, Ch. (1990), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*. Cape Town, London, p. 1.

²⁹ The 'women as victims paradigm'. See e.g. Allman, J., Geiger, S. & Musisi, N. (2002), *Women in African Colonial Histories*. Bloomington.

³⁰ Allman, J. & Tashjian, V. (2000), *'I will not eat stone'. A women's history of colonial Ashante*. Oxford, Cape Town. Introduction.

and these inconsistencies and tensions became increasingly apparent in the study of gender, as much as they did in other fields of social analysis.³¹

A way in which to account for the multiplicity of experiences and policies of colonialism – to allow for the recognition of different colonialisms – has been, since the late 1980s, a growing concern with cultural dimensions. Colonialism is increasingly understood to have been a cultural project as much as a project of socioeconomic transformation and political disempowerment.³² Scholars have directed their interests towards the reconfiguration of gender ideologies and relations, and their intersection with race and class, in conjunction with missionary activities and the patriarchal policies of the colonial state.³³ This debate has increased sensitivity for the multiple ideological and symbolic constructions of social relations in general and of gender in particular, as part of the colonial project. The discursive exclusion of women, as it problematically stabilised and was shaped in the colonial archives, became a powerful means of perpetuating women's marginality and eventual invisibility in society and history. To counter this purposeful amnesia and restore women to the centre stage by analysing the ways in which women have been silenced and how an almost exclusively male voice emerged under colonialism have become crucial.³⁴ The debate has remained critical with regard to the repeated dichotomy between voice and silence, whilst remaining alert to the pitfalls of so-called "recovery projects".³⁵ Most recent scholarly work has been concerned with the need to link ideological and symbolic discourses or, in more general terms, the production of knowledge to specific historical contexts in which particular constellations of power and disempowerment emerged.³⁶

The following chapters draw much from these reflections within African gender and women's history and the exploration of gender under colonialism in the Namibian context is deeply indebted to these debates. The thesis remains modest in its basic intent to ask the "old" question about the impact of German and South African colonialism on the transformation and constitution of gender relations in north-western Namibia between the late 19th

³¹ Woodward, Hayes & Minkley (2002), p. xxxiii.

³² Various authors have contributed to the debate on colonialism's culture, among them Stoler, A. L. (1989), *Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality*. *American Ethnologist*, 16, 4: 634-660; Comaroff, J. & Comaroff, J. (1991), *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*. Chicago. Introduction; Thomas, N. (1994), *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government*. Princeton.

³³ Grosz-Ngaté & Kokole (1997), p. 9.

³⁴ The introduction to Woodward, Hayes & Minkley (2002) is the most elaborate one in this regard.

³⁵ See e.g. Haggis, J. (1998), *White women and colonialism: towards a non-recuperative history*. In Midgley, C. (ed), *Gender and Imperialism*. Manchester, pp. 45-78. See more generally Ghosh, (2004).

³⁶ Hunt, N.R., Liu, T.P. & Quataert, J. (1997), *Gendered Colonialisms in African history*. Oxford, Malden. Introduction.

and mid 20th century. African communities in Kaoko are at the centre of attention and therefore I focus on the dynamics of gender within the regional society, although the constitution of white masculinities is repeatedly touched upon (Part V & VI). Indeed, the thesis remains open to the complexity of these differences – both between men and women, African or European, as much as within the various male and female entities. As the title suggests, the chapters all explore facets of gender, and they hopefully do so in accessible and thoughtful ways. But the thesis is a recovery project, too. The reasons for this are intrinsically linked to the peculiarities of Namibian history at large and, as we shall see, to the historiography of Kaoko in particular. Consequently, some chapters do have a strong empirical focus (e.g. Part I), while others engage more extensively with discursive and symbolic representations (e.g. Part VI). Throughout the analysis, I refer to the ways the archive enforces female silences (e.g. Part IV), although I have tried to remain careful in not “fetishising the domain of the archive and the text” too much.³⁷ And though my concern throughout the project has been to trace the lives and experiences of women in the region, the dissertation says as much about men and masculinity as it does about women and femininity. Indeed, the Namibian material specifically complicated the empirical and theoretical exploration of gender and gender relations. The problem of the colonial archive is important in this regard; yet there are other reasons why the historical genesis of gender often remained elusive, and some of these will be discussed throughout the thesis. I have also attempted to maintain a balanced and critical approach in reconstructing and interpreting colonialism in the north-western part of Namibia, understanding the period under consideration in terms of fractured and ambivalent colonialisms, rather than recounting the genesis of a coherent and successful colonial appropriation. Indeed, allowing for the fact that tensions and inconsistencies emerging in any colonial context can disclose sites and spaces for African agency, that of men and women, this thesis pays special attention to these, empirically and theoretically. The concern with gender and with the “recovery” of women’s *and* men’s experiences and perspectives entailed, not least, a methodological consideration which has been continuously addressed in African history – i.e. taking into account oral histories and memories.

Narrating the past – some reflections on methodology

The main sources for the thesis have been the written documents held in the National Archives of Namibia in Windhoek. As with any public archive, the way these particular written materials have been collected, organized and filed reflects the organizational pattern and

³⁷ Hunt Liu & Quataert (1997), p. 8. .

workings of the former colonial state. The correspondence is a dynamic one. The archive is almost silent for the pre-colonial period, where information on Kaoko is very limited. The first part of the thesis, concerned with the late 19th century, relies heavily upon published sources, i.e. travelogues by hunters and adventurers and upon oral information. Missionary reports, being the standard source for pre-colonial Namibian history, are not available for Kaoko before the late 1890s, although some authors tried to reconstruct developments since the 1870s. The situation does not improve significantly for the German colonial period, in which Kaoko still remained outside the government's sphere of control; the sources continue to be scattered and fragmented. They mainly consist of reports by members of the German police and military who scouted the region, and the diaries of former soldiers, who were involved in military skirmishes or were temporarily stationed on Kaoko's southern margins. The official records are complemented by missionary accounts, again with a focus on the southern areas.³⁸ For the South African period of colonial rule, the archival sources reflect the gradual establishment of administrative structures, and the more these developed, the more coherent the reporting by the various administrative bodies of the state became. In this context, the synthesis of records produced by the central government was essential and included the administrator's and the secretary's offices, the department of lands, the veterinary or medical services etc., and records from regional and local units such as the native affairs office in Ondangwa, the magistrate's office in Outjo or the police posts in Kaoko itself. The files do not constitute coherent entities for various reasons. They include different genres and kinds of sources – letters, highly standardised reports, notes, telegrams etc. – and throughout the thesis the problems linked to these various sources will be addressed. Generally speaking, the written source material does not allow for the reconstruction of a chronological outline of Kaoko's past between the 1870s and the 1950s, and the thesis does not intend to recover a successional archival narrative. Instead, I have been concerned with questions about the nature of Kaoko's colonial archive, the kind of narrative it produces and the kind of historical interpretation it suggests. Indeed, going through the many files related to the former reserve³⁹ has resulted in the identification of a number of condensations, archival "highlights", defining moments, events and constellations in the past, which led to an intensified production of written documents by the agents of the colonial state and by members of the colonial society. While bearing in mind that we have to reflect on the

³⁸ These documents are held by the archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) and by the mission archives of the Rhenish Mission Society in Wuppertal in Germany (RMG).

³⁹ The files have been compiled in an unpublished index, in which every document has been key-worded. Rizzo, L. (2001), *Index zum Archivmaterial zu Kaoko im Nationalarchiv Windhoek*. Basel.

conditions under which such condensations became possible, and why they are historically meaningful, these nodal points of colonial discourse have largely determined, as we shall see, the structure and conceptual framework of the chapters (II, III, V & VI). In principal, I have therefore very consciously read the archive *with the grain*, to use a current phrasing.⁴⁰

The structure of the thesis has, however, also been determined by a similar phenomenon in oral histories about Kaoko, in which some narrations remarkably stand out (chapters I and IV). To avoid any misunderstanding: I do not suggest that these oral condensations constitute or refer to what Elizabeth Tonkin has rightly criticised as the idea of an oral 'tradition', in contrast to oral 'knowledge'.⁴¹ Nor do these highlights, to push the analogy with the archive further, constitute an "invisible text which is talked out again and again, with varying degrees of corruption or interference".⁴² The narrations, which have been the starting point for two chapters in the thesis, resulted from interviewees recounting particular events and experiences in a very specific context; what shaped these contexts and the kinds of knowledge about the past they disclosed remain part of the story to be told.

I have used interviews done in Kaoko between 2001 and 2002 with men and women residing in the region at the time. The selection of interviewees depended on a variety of factors. I worked with local translators, teachers based in Kaoko, and the identification and selection of people willing to share their knowledge with me depended very much on the teachers' mediation. I had also articulated the wish to talk to elderly people, preferably those in their 70s and 80s, and to privilege women over men. My focus on female interviewees was linked to the silencing of women in the archive; yet, I have hopefully remained cautious and transparent in using the interviews as mere substitutes for missing information in the written documents. The interviews were translated on the spot, and they were tape-recorded. In a second step, the taped versions of the conversations were transcribed and translated by native speakers in Windhoek, who had no personal relation to the interviewees and had not been to Kaoko on the occasion of my research. The necessity to transform oral testimonies into written texts in order to become "useful" for historical analysis has been referred to by many scholars of African history.⁴³ Furthermore, the empiricist assumption that we can extract historical facts from oral testimonies and use them in the interpretation of the past

⁴⁰ For the debates around reading the archives with or against the grain see Hamilton, C., Harris, V., Taylor, J., Pickover, M., Reid, G. & Saleh, R. (2002), *Refiguring the Archive*. Cape Town.

⁴¹ Tonkin, E. (1986), "Investigating Oral Tradition". *Journal of African History*, 27, 1986: 203–213, here p. 206.

⁴² Cohen, D.W. (1980), Reconstructing a conflict in Bunafu: seeking evidence outside the narrative tradition. In Miller, J.C. (ed), *The African Past Speaks*. Folkestone, Hamden. The passage is quoted in Tonkin (1986), p. 207.

⁴³ See e.g. Guy, J. (1994), "Making Words Visible: Aspects of Orality, Literacy, Illiteracy and History in Southern Africa". *South African Historical Journal*, 31: 3–27.

remained a problem in the thesis.⁴⁴ I have decided to treat the oral testimonies and stories I collected in Kaoko as *oral knowledge*, for various reasons. They do not constitute traditions and they do not convey information about the past in rigid, standardised narrative forms.⁴⁵ Rather, the interviews were situations in which the speaker, often various speakers, contributed to *discussions* about specific issues - such as war and conflict, colonialism, missions, etc. - and about specific historical individuals and events, i.e. the native commissioners and local political dignitaries, or the introduction and application of a particular colonial legislation. In addition to these frequently disjointed reflections and interpretations of the past, I have extensively used oral testimonies from north-western Kaoko edited by the anthropologist Michael Bollig and classified by the author as oral traditions.⁴⁶

The attempt to synthesise archival documents, oral data collected by myself and edited testimonies has led me to choose a methodology, which widely subscribes to the assumption that “there is no essential difference between oral and written literature”.⁴⁷ In fact, I strongly argue throughout the thesis that the archival materials do not represent a coherent form of literacy, nor do the oral testimonies constitute orality in a pure form. Rather, I have given attention to the fusion of various genres,⁴⁸ sources, and forms of knowledge production, focusing on the interdependencies, mutual influences and intersections between written, oral and visual material. Theoretically, this has enabled me to loosen the rigid dichotomy between the literary and the oral and to investigate, on the one hand, how specific narrative fields emerged under changing socio-political constellations in a region, which increasingly came under colonial rule. On the other hand, the interpretation of contemporary oral knowledge has been done against the backdrop of a genesis of specific ways of talking and writing about the region, which should not be conceived of in terms of a disjuncture between a metropolitan written discourse linked to Windhoek and the archival institutions of the colonial state, and indigenous, local oral discourses produced within rural African communities.⁴⁹ This does not imply that there were and are no differences among stories told, among various authors and tellers, or that the interpretation of sources does not necessarily require a careful contextualisation and social understanding of the conditions under which they have

⁴⁴ Tonkin (1986), p. 210.

⁴⁵ See White, L., Miescher, S. & Cohen, D.W. (2001), *African Words, African Voices*. Bloomington. Introduction.

⁴⁶ Bollig (1997).

⁴⁷ Vail, L. & White, L. (1991), *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History*. London, p. 73.

⁴⁸ Brinkman, I. & Fleisch, A. (1997), *Grandmother's Footsteps. Oral tradition and south-east Angolan narratives on the colonial encounter*. Köln, p. 27.

⁴⁹ For a critical discussion of the distinction between oral and literal societies see the introduction to Brinkman, I. (1996), *Kikuyu Gender Norms and Narratives*. Leiden.

been produced. Rather, my intent has been to direct attention towards the question of how and when information – written, oral and visual - becomes evidence for historical agents and for historians. This has particularly been true for the analysis of historical photographs (part VI), where a vast repertoire of evidential concepts, ideas and terminologies come to the fore and where issues of authorisation, veracity and, eventually, the problematic relationship between historical realities and the ways these are mediated through any form of representation, become so apparent.

The structure of the thesis

As mentioned above, the concept and structure of the thesis has very much been informed by what I have termed highlights in the archival and oral narratives about Kaoko.

Part I, *Gender & Conflict*, is concerned with what has been termed, in Namibian historiography, the expansion of the Oorlam raiding economy throughout south-western Africa since the late 18th century. The integration of Kaoko into the capitalised economies of the Cape and into the sphere of action of advancing Oorlam commandos began in the mid 1870s and triggered off an extensive socio-economic transformation in the region throughout the 1880s and 1890s. The political centres of these processes were, as we shall see, located on the southern margin of Kaoko, with the Fransfontein and, in particular, the Sesfontein leadership claiming territorial authority. In contrast to the hitherto existing ethnography and historiography, which classifies the population and leadership in the area as “Nama”, I will argue for an interpretation beyond a narrow idea of ethnicity, for various reasons. As Dederig has shown, the differentiations between Nama, Nama-Oorlam and Oorlam groups in early 19th century Namibia was problematic, and sources often created confusion rather than clearly reflecting ethnicity in the region.⁵⁰ Regarding the sources on Kaoko, in both written and oral ones, a similar lack of clarity and inconsistency - or openness - can be identified, and various terminologies referring to the region’s inhabitants are used. Yet, in terms of processes described, of the expansion of raids and the commodities purchased, as well as of the political transformations being initiated, the developments in Kaoko in the late 19th century can and should be conceived of as a perpetuation, both in space and time, of the Oorlam economies in the region. It is not so much a question of the emergence of a cultural identity to be termed Oorlam; rather, the developments in the north-western region suggest an understanding of the socio-economic transformation leading to the emergence of a ruling class, which indeed disposed of a specific set of means of production – guns,

⁵⁰ Dederig, T. (1997), *Hate the Old and Follow the New. Khoekhoe and Missionaries in Early 19th century Namibia*. Stuttgart.

horses, livestock - and applied, as we shall see, a specific repertoire of territorial and political conquest and hegemony. Eventually, the first part of the thesis suggests an engagement with a perspective of *longue durée*, extending the debate on the raiding economies from the late 18th to the late 19th and early 20th century.

Part II, *Gender & Colonial Counter Insurgency*, starts with one of the historical sources on Kaoko, which is frequently and, alas, often uncritically referred to in the reports by the first South African resident commissioner in the northern territories, Major Charles N. Manning. Within Namibian historiography, Manning's military expeditions to northern Namibia, which marked the advent of South African claims to control the centralised kingdoms of Owambo, have gained prominence, not least because they culminated in the dramatic dethronement and eventual killing of the Kwanyama king, Mandume ya Ndemufayo in 1917. Manning's endeavours to the north-west, however, are much less known, although the connections between the military intrusion into both the central north and Kaoko were, as I will argue, more than relevant. Throughout the chapters dealing with the mid 1910s, the main concern has been to read and interpret Manning's narrative against the backdrop of changing demographic and political constellations in the region. Immigration from Angola into Kaoko, which re-initiated raids and consequently led to the dislocation of many people, emerged as an important trope in both oral and colonial histories of Kaoko. Significantly, the socio-political distress in the region by the late 1910s favoured the beginnings of administrative policy and, to a certain extent, action in Kaoko by the South African administration. Manning's narrative of indirect rule in Kaoko was primarily concerned with the demarcation of ethnic groups and the identification of political leaders associated with them. Using the debates around the concept of counter insurgency, the thesis embeds the reports by the South African military administration in a genealogy of colonial and, eventually, scholarly writing about Kaoko and its inhabitants. Parts I and II can both be read as examples of how the increase of violence and socio-economic, as well as ecological disruption, create conditions in which gender relations gravitate towards male control over the productive and reproductive functions of women, the more so if the resources of power on which male authority and status is constructed become increasingly contested.

Part III, *Gender & Containment*, focuses on the reconstruction of administrative policies and interventions of the South African administration in the 1920s. This period is generally considered to be crucial for the establishment of a colonial system in Namibia.⁵¹ As I will argue throughout the chapters, the central government in Windhoek was indeed pushing

⁵¹ See Silvester, J., Wallace, M. & Hayes, P. (1998), 'Trees Never Meet'. *Mobility & Containment: An Overview 1915-46*. In: Hayes, P., Silvester, J., Wallace, M. & Hartmann, W. (eds), *Namibia under South African Rule. Mobility and Containment 1915-46*. Oxford, Windhoek, Athens, pp. 3-48.

forward the creation of clear and settled conditions in the northwest, including the creation of reserves, the settlement of communities, the regulation of mobility, and the enforcement of indirect rule. The world they aimed to create was definitely a man's world. Yet, as the analysis will show, the 1920s in Kaoko are an example of how fractured, ambivalent and, at times, contradictory colonial administration in southern Africa was. These ambivalences, contradictions, tensions and, more often than expected, failures of the colonial administration become very visible if approached through local differentiations, through the ways the communities in the region negotiated and, on occasion, successfully subverted the state's attempts to contain them. Indeed, the case of Kaoko shows that the chronologies of colonial rule in Namibia remain contested, and that, at least in the north-western region, the 1920s were by far a decade in which colonial administration materialized in a stable form. This judgement proves true although the South African government undertook one of the most dramatic forced removals in the colony at the time.

Part IV, *Gender & Colonial Law*, marks a decisive moment in the history of Kaoko. It highlights the importance of colonial law as a realm in which the state pushed through its interests and claims to authority. Part IV is largely informed by oral knowledge collected in Kaoko, as it was discursively organized around the story of the shooting of an elephant and the murder of a witness. Consequently, the analysis reads the legal case emerging around the killing of game and the killing of an African man as a narrative field, in which the representatives of the colonial state, political leaders in the region and various members of the local communities negotiated issues of social and physical security, of violence, of resource management and residence and, eventually, of individual and collective rights. Therein colonial law became an idiom through which conflicts could be attended to. Beyond this, the legal arena emerged as one crucial sphere in which reconstitutions and contestations of gender relations became particularly virulent.

Part V, *Gender & the Technologies of Empire*, links up with the previous chapters and with the question of chronologies of colonial history. It mainly argues that the second half of the 1930s were the years in which the South African administration could successfully establish itself in Kaoko. This part of the thesis addresses the inoculation campaigns against lung sickness in Kaoko in 1937 and in 1938. I will show that, although in terms of veterinary development and policy in the region, the campaigns were a disastrous failure which triggered off disruptive dynamics of spreading diseases, they were a crucial instrument of rule, i.e. a technology of power. The imposition of colonial rule and control affected two of the most important spheres of social, political and economic life in Kaoko: the pastoral economy and the headmen council system; again the implications and repercussions for the status and role of African women and men were significant. Generally speaking, the 1930s was the

period that laid the groundwork for what has been termed the “colonial encapsulation” and isolation of Kaoko as a reserve on the territory’s periphery.

The last Part, *Gender & Visuality*, addresses a development in Kaoko’s past, which gained importance and relevance during the period after World War II. It is the genesis of Kaoko and its tribalized population as a consumption asset for the southern African settler societies. This commodification of the region within a specific symbolic and ideological economy, in which the idea of a modern, industrialised, “white” South Africa (including the Namibian settler society) contrasted an idealised vision of “Africa untamed”, is interpreted against the policies of isolation and encapsulation of the 1930s. Visuality was crucial in the construction and consumption of Kaoko as “the place of the Ovahimba”, of an indigenous population allegedly living beyond the disruptive long arm of urbanisation, modernity and consumerism. Women in particular became symbols and representatives of this culturalised and naturalised space of indigeneness and upon closer inspection we’ll see how accentuated the tension between women’s silence, yet striking visibility in the colonial archives, became in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Part I

Gender and Conflict

1. The expansion & collapse of Oorlam socio-economic hegemony in Kaoko

1.1. Compulsory land and stock expropriation in Sesfontein

On the 17th July 1906, a meeting was held at Sesfontein in southern Kaoko. Some of the local Topnaar community's leading men attended, including the mission evangelist Nikodemus Kido,¹ the government surgeon Jungels, a settler and trader based in the region named Carl Schlettwein, and the district commander Lieutenant Schmidt. Kido, Jungels and Schlettwein had been appointed members of a commission charged with estimating the value of the community's possession in large stock, which the German colonial authorities intended to confiscate.² The commission's report, compiled by Lieutenant Schmidt, listed the large stock owned by – or rather attributed to – seven men and two women and the financial compensation in German Reichsmark the stock owners would receive in return. A total amount of 81 large stock was given an estimated exchange value of 14,560 Reichsmark.³

Besides their cattle, the Sesfontein community lost its entire land to the German government in return for the right of residence, on condition of regular lease payments to the colonial authorities.⁴ Yet, the district commander reserved the right to relocate the community, in the event an unspecified need arose, and to force them into dependent work relations. The right of residence merely included the allotment of 2 ha of garden land and the ownership of small stock, provided it did not exceed a total of 1500 animals. What remained an unsettled matter was the handling and disposition of the community's savings, consisting of 1665 Reichsmark and 41 head of small stock, evidently intended for the construction of a church building.⁵ As a remarkable exception, Nikodemus Kido, the local evangelist, was

¹ Nikodemus Kido originated from Fransfontein and was considered a member of a Swartbooi family according to missionary sources. Locally, i.e. in oral information, the Kido family is part of Sesfontein's Topnaar leadership.

² NAN ZBU 2030 W II d 25 Bd 1, Nama: Nama des Kaokofeldes (Topnaars von Zesfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893), Leutnant und Distriktchef Schmidt an das Kaiserliche Distriktamt, Zessfontein, 18. Juli 1906.

³ The large stock was intended for sale at auction in Outjo to local European farmers. Between late 1907 and early 1908 the community in Sesfontein received small stock, which had been bought with two-thirds of the compensation money, while the remaining one-third was refunded in the form of an allocation of additional garden land. NAN ZUBU 155 A VI a 3, Band 17, Leutnant v. Braur, (Sesfontein). Jahresbericht über die Zeit vom 1.4.07 bis 31.3.08, Sesfontein, 9.4.1908.

⁴ NAN ZBU 2030 W II d 25 Bd 1, Nama: Nama des Kaokofeldes (Topnaars von Zesfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893), Leutnant Schmidt an das Kaiserliche Distriktamt, Zessfontein, 17. Juli 1906.

⁵ NAN ZBU 2030 W II d 25 Bd 1, Nama: Nama des Kaokofeldes (Topnaars von Zesfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893), Leutnant Schmidt an das Kaiserliche Distriktamt, Zessfontein, 18. Juli 1906.

allowed to keep his 18 head of large stock. However, this privilege was to expire the day he died, when the cattle would again be taken over by the German authorities.⁶

The confiscation of cattle and land was part and parcel of a general expropriation of Sesfontein's "tribal property" (*Stammesvermögen*), which had been a consequence of the Topnaar leadership's alleged involvement in the colonial war ravaging the territory since 1904.⁷

In what follows, I will sketch the context in which the expropriation of Sesfontein took place, and will situate the German intervention in the northwest in a broader perspective by comparing it to contemporary developments on the northern margins of the territory and its centrepiece, i.e. central and southern colonial Namibia. The references to a colonial presence in Kaoko, e.g. by missionaries or soldiers, will remain superficial for the moment, as we will later explore in more detail the historical genesis of the constellation which emerged at the beginning of the 1900s.

1.1.1 The German colonial war policy and its ambivalence towards the territory's margins

The colonial war of 1904 has received broad attention within Namibian historiography.⁸ On the 12th January 1904, several groups of Herero under the leadership of Samuel Maharero attacked German troops in Okahandja and successfully occupied vast areas in central Namibia, including German owned farms, where they were said to have killed several farmers and their families.⁹ A war was launched, which soon reached the southern part of the territory and would have disastrous effects for the majority of the African population. In the beginning, the German troops almost had to accept their defeat, but thanks to their military resources and substantial additional support from the German metropolis they overcame their adversaries and pursued a merciless war of destruction.¹⁰ A first climax was reached in the Waterberg area, when German troops forced the surviving Herero communities into the deserts of the Omaheke and prevented them from accessing water and grazing resources

⁶ NAN ZBU 2030 W II d 25 Bd 1, Nama: Nama des Kaokofeldes (Topnaars von Zesfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893), Leutnant Schmidt and das Kaiserliche Distriktamt, Zessfontein, 18. Juli 1906.

⁷ The confiscation was based on an ordinance issued by the colonial government on the 23rd March 1906. See Zimmerer, J. (2001), *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner. Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia*. Hamburg, p. 65. The ordinance was reprinted in the *Deutsche Kolonialgesetzgebung* 10 (1906), p. 142ff. The ordinance's main focus was the confiscation of Herero stock and land in central Namibia.

⁸ See e.g. Drechsler, H: (1985), *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft*. Berlin; Bley, H. (1968), *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1894–1915*. Hamburg; Gewalt, J.B. (1999), *Herero Heroes. A Socio-Political History of Namibia 1890–1923*. Oxford; Zimmerer (2001). For a discussion of the historiography see Miescher (2009), p. 81.

⁹ NAN ZBU 152 AVI a 3 Band 11, Jahresberichte 1904–5, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Bezirks Outjo im Jahre 1904/05, von Wangenheim, n.d.

¹⁰ Miescher (2009), pp. 81ff.

necessary for the survival of people and herds of livestock. Immediately after the defeat of the Herero troops, the conflict broke out in southern Namibia, where Hendrik Witbooi had been mobilising against the threat of the German military.¹¹ Here too, the war was brutal, although Witbooi's troops avoided open battles and instead chose a guerrilla strategy, which enabled them to prevent a German victory until 1908.

The colonial war of 1904-7 marks a turning point in Namibia's history that remains within the focus of historiographical and public debates.¹² Besides causing dramatic loss of life and the socio-economic collapse in the central and southern parts of the territory, the war initiated a process of significant structural transformation of the prevailing economic and power constellations. The German government released a series of ordinances and laws¹³ aimed at undermining the economic independence of Africans, at controlling their mobility and at forcing them into the colonial economy as a dependent workforce.¹⁴ The abovementioned ordinance of March 1906 concerning the confiscation of tribal land and so-called movable property was decisive, as it enabled the colonial state to appropriate vast parts of formerly African-owned land and stock.¹⁵ By August 1907, confiscations all over the German controlled territory had become effectual in legal terms. Thereafter, African ownership of large stock required special permission, the size of African settlements were limited and Africans were forced to carry passes and subjected to rigid legislation regulating dependent working conditions.

While the war and its aftermath changed the situation in southern and central Namibia dramatically, the situation in the northern part of the territory, where German presence was much weaker and in many areas close to non-existent, proved to be much more ambivalent. With regard to Owambo, i.e. the densely populated central northern areas, the German colonial government's main interest up until the war period had been the recruitment of workers for the colonial economy.¹⁶ The German colonial administration lacked military and economic resources, and the northern African societies, particularly the centralised royal houses of Kwanyama and Ondonga, were strong. The colonial authorities had, therefore, up

¹¹ Hendrik Witbooi was the main Nama leader in the south. See e.g. Bley (1968), pp. 185–187.

¹² See Förster, L., Henrichsen, D. & Bollig, M. (2004), *Namibia–Deutschland. Eine geteilte Geschichte. Widerstand – Gewalt – Erinnerung*. Köln; Krüger, G. (1999), *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewusstsein. Realität, Deutung und Verarbeitung des deutschen Kolonialkriegs in Namibia 1904 bis 1907*. Göttingen.

¹³ Miescher (2009), p. 82.

¹⁴ Zimmerer (2001).

¹⁵ Werner, W. (1998), 'No One Will Become Rich'. *Economy and Society in the Herero Reserves in Namibia, 1915–1946*. Basel, p. 47.

¹⁶ Eirola, M. (1992), *The Ovambogefahr. The Ovamboland Reservation in the Making – Political Responses of the Kingdom of Ondonga to the German Colonial Power 1884–1910*. Rovaniemi, p. 213ff.

until then declined to occupy the northern areas. When the war broke out, the German claim to Owambo became even more incongruous. The confrontations in central and southern Namibia tied up most of their military resources. When troops from Ondonga attacked one of the German outposts in the north, the police station at Namutoni, the colonial government faced the threat that the war might eventually spread to the north. To avert such a situation, the colonial state forbade trade and movement into Owambo in 1906 thereby hoping to prevent exports of arms to the north and any potential conflicts between European traders or recruiters and Owambo leaders.¹⁷ Hence, the war situation and Owambo's resistance to German military presence eventually forced the colonial state to find an alternative to open conflict. The battle of Namutoni remained the only instance of fighting, and it guaranteed the continuity of independence of the northern polities, at least temporarily.¹⁸ In fact, none of the Owambo leaders ventured to participate in the acts of war further south.¹⁹

The situation in Kavango, the north-eastern part of the territory, was in contrast rather different. German interest in Kavango had originally been determined mainly by the need to prevent a repeated carry-over of rinderpest from the region,²⁰ and the control of trade and mobility routes from and to Kavango worked out rather well.²¹ By the 1900s a growing interest in Kavango as a potential area for white settlement emerged, and a number of expeditions ventured into the north-east in order to explore the suitability of local conditions.²² Yet, military expansion and claims to occupy the region remained minimal, at least on the central government's side. Although in 1903 Lieutenant Volkman, the district commander of the north-eastern district of Grootfontein, (which administratively included Kavango), had repeatedly tried to implicate the Kwangali leadership into open military confrontation, he was soon ordered back by the Governor.²³ Eventually, the German authorities abandoned

¹⁷ Miescher (2009), p. 81ff.

¹⁸ See e.g. Williams, F.N. (1991), *Precolonial Communities of South Western Africa. A History of the Owambo Kingdoms, 1600–1920*. Windhoek, pp. 148–150.

¹⁹ Zimmerer explains the Namutoni battle as an expression of Ndonga's own interests and classifies it as an exception to the general failure of Maharero to mobilize allies beyond the Herero society, see Zimmerer (2001), p. 33/34.

²⁰ Eckl, A.E. (2004), *Herrschaft, Macht und Einfluss. Koloniale Interaktionen am Kavango (Nord-Namibia) von 1891 bis 1921*. Köln, p. 36. The rinderpest pandemic reached Namibia in 1897 and had disastrous effects on the colony's cattle economy. Miescher has shown the problem of identifying the precise trajectory of the pandemic, as most contemporary explanations blamed Africans for allowing rinderpest to enter the territory. See Miescher (2009), p. 55. I will discuss rinderpest's effects on northwestern Namibia later on.

²¹ Miescher (2009), pp. 61ff.

²² Eckl (2004), p. 37.

²³ Eckl (2004), p. 41ff.

any plans to open a police or military post in Kavango and, when the war began in 1904, they more or less ignored the region for several years.²⁴

As we saw, the German authorities chose a more interventionist strategy in Kaoko. By confiscating all so-called moveable and unmovable tribal property, including land and large stock, their handling of the situation in the north-western area was attuned to the ways they had been operating in central and southern Namibia. Obviously, the constellations in Kaoko differed significantly from those in Owambo and Kavango. Let us therefore return to the meeting at Sesfontein in 1906, when the local community seemingly lost most of its possessions.

1.2. Southern Kaoko at the outbreak of the war

In order to gain an impression of the situation in southern Kaoko at the beginning of the 20th century, we have to rely on a few missionary reports and scattered information provided by members of the German military troops stationed in the area, or by adventurers and traders entering the region. It goes without saying that these sources are highly problematic and biased, as they follow colonial and missionary narratives of supremacy towards an African population, which was facing dramatic socio-economic changes and shifts in power constellations.

In May 1900, missionary Heinrich Riechmann of the Rhenish Mission Society journeyed from Fransfontein where he had opened the first mission station in the north-western area in 1899 to Sesfontein, a trip which would take him several arduous weeks of meandering with his heavy ox-wagon through an inhospitable landscape of thorny bush, stony gorges and sandy riverbeds.²⁵ In his report to the deputation the missionary sketched a picture of desolation and squalor. He encountered numerous herds of small and big game along the way, but most places, which had been inhabited in earlier years such as the big fountains at Otjitambi,²⁶ had been deserted and people had apparently dispersed far beyond the main routes and sites known to the missionary. When Riechmann eventually reached Sesfontein, his expectations were no less disappointed. A small group of around 80 people were said to be residing there.²⁷ The copious gardens where maize, wheat, vegetables and tobacco used to be harvested looked shabby and abandoned. To the missionary's discontent the few goats

²⁴ Eckl (2004), p. 53.

²⁵ RMG 2.499 a C/h 8 a, Franzfontein, Bd 1, 1899–1906, Riechmann an die Deputation, Franzfontein, 11.7.1900.

²⁶ Otjitambi was one of the biggest natural fountains in south-eastern Kaoko and one of the prominent sites on the road into the north-eastern area of the territory. Due to its favourable water conditions, Otjitambi is one of the oldest known places of residence in southern Kaoko.

²⁷ ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.40, Beilagen zu den Konferenzprotokollen 1901–03 & 1905, Riechmann an die Deputation, März, 1901.

the people kept were used to barter coffee, sugar and other items sold by traders and there were no signs of a stock economy covering the local community's subsistence.²⁸ Indeed, the Rhenish Mission's most remote outpost which, but a few years before, had induced expectations of a long-standing and successful missionary endeavour in Kaoko²⁹ had lost its prosperity. Rinderpest, several years of drought and a fever pandemic had hit the area. Yet, Riechmann left no doubt that the main cause of Sesfontein's economic and social disintegration had most of all been the Topnaar leadership's incompetence and mismanagement.³⁰

While Riechmann's narrative legitimised missionary intervention in the north-western area of the territory and the high costs the maintenance of a Sesfontein mission outpost would most probably generate, his account of economic and social decay was echoed in early reports by the German military personnel stationed in the region.

As we shall see, the entanglement of various agents of the colonial state, missionaries, business enterprises and the Topnaar leadership in Sesfontein began in the mid-1880s, some of which took highly conflictual and violent forms. Yet, up until the 1900s, effective German presence in the north-western part of the territory remained marginal and colonial aims and interests had not merged into a coherent policy. In March 1901, a district command under Lieutenant Viktor Franke was stationed at Sesfontein to supervise the entire area up to the Kunene, the northern margin of Kaoko and formally the border between the German colony and Portuguese Angola.³¹ The primary aim of the military post was first to undermine smuggling of arms and ammunition within the area and through Kaoko into Owambo; the second was to put an end to illegal hunting activities by Portuguese and Boer hunters regularly entering Kaoko from the north.³² The colonial government suspected they were infiltrating German territory in large parties, spending several weeks at favourable places such as Otjijandjasemo in northern Kaoko or Kaoko Otavi in the region's centre, equipped with guns, ammunition and trading goods, and successfully cooperating with local guides and hunters.³³ The significant and lucrative business of hunting big game appar-

²⁸ RMG 2.499 a C/h 8a, Franzfontein, Bd 1, 1899–1906, Riechmann an die Deputation, Franzfontein, 11.7.1900.

²⁹ RMG 2.499 a C/h 8a, Franzfontein, Bd 1, 1899–1906, Riechmann an die Deputation, Franzfontein, 22.4.1897.

³⁰ ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.40, Beilagen zu den Konferenzprotokollen 1901–03 & 1905, Riechmann an die Deputation, März, 1901.

³¹ NAN ZBU 148, A VI a 3 Bd 6, Jahresberichte 1900/1901, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks in der Zeit vom 1. Juli 1900 bis 30. Juni 1901, Bezirkshauptmann Kliefoth, Outjo, 28.5.1901.

³² NAN ZBU 148, A VI a 3 Bd 7, Jahresberichte 1901/02, Anlage VI zum Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks im Jahre 1901/1902, Oberleutnant Franke, 16.6.1902.

³³ NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 Vol 1, Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia, 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, Sanitatas, nördliches Kaokoveld, 15.9.1900.

ently linked southern Angola, Kaoko and Owambo and continued to operate outside of German control. Besides, rumours of Boer-driven attempts to undermine Topnaar leadership in Kaoko and dominate commercial trade in the region began to crop up in the police reports.³⁴ Generally, there were various European-driven commercial activities in the area, which increasingly called for state supervision. The Kaoko Land und Minengesellschaft, a prospecting company operating in the north-west was a case in point, and its local representative, the settler and businessman Carl Schlettwein, who had bought a farm in Warmquelle close to Sesfontein, seemed to benefit from his almost exclusive monopoly on small scale trade in tobacco and stock with the local African people.³⁵ Franke acknowledged the lack of expertise on the government's side from the very beginning of his presence in Kaoko. Information concerning the strength of Sesfontein's population, their economic wellbeing and their political orientation had been increasingly contradictory.³⁶ In 1902 the number of residents had reached 120, most of them women and children, and the station commander conceded that he neither knew how many people lived in Sesfontein's surroundings, nor what their economic activities consisted of, beyond growing maize and wheat in the local gardens.³⁷ When the war started in 1904 and the military forces were withdrawn from the north-western outposts in order to be available in central Namibia, things had not improved in terms of Franke's original intentions – illegal hunting and the trade in arms and ammunition had continued almost unhindered and beyond the grasp of the German authorities.³⁸

The beginning of the war and the withdrawal of the German military troops, as well as the temporary collapse of missionary activities in the north-western area, necessarily reduced colonial reporting to a minimum. Information on how the Sesfontein leadership came to be involved in the fighting, and for what reasons, remains scant and exists exclusively in accounts authored by the colonial authorities and the missionaries in 1905 and 1906, when the conflict had been settled to the advantage of the German military troops and government. In March 1906, missionary Heinrich Brockmann, who had followed the deceased Riechmann in 1904, reported to the Rhenish Mission Society's deputation that

³⁴ NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 Vol 1, Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia, 1898–1907, Geheimerbericht von Georg Hartmann, Sanitatas, nördliches Kaokoveld, 15.9.1900.

³⁵ NAN ZBU 148, A VI a 3 Bd 7, Jahresberichte 1901/02, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks im Jahre 1901/1902, Bezirkshauptmann Kliefoth, Outjo, 18.6.1902.

³⁶ NAN ZBU 1011, J XIII b 5, Bd 2, 1900–1914, Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokofeld, Bezirkshauptmann Oberleutnant Franke, Bericht über eine Reise nach Zessfontein ausgeführt im Januar 1900.

³⁷ NAN ZBU 148, A VI a 3 Bd 7, Jahresberichte 1901/02, Anlage VI zum Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks im Jahre 1901/1902, Oberleutnant Franke, 16.6.1902.

³⁸ NAN ZBU 151, A VI a 3 Bd 10, Jahresberichte 1903/04, Bezirkshauptmann i.V. Russmann, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Bezirks Outjo im Jahre 1903/04, Outjo, 13.4.1904,.

a group of leaders from Sesfontein and Fransfontein, including the captains Jan Uixamab and Lazarus Swartbooi, had been arrested and taken to Outjo charged with murder, plundering and unspecified involvement in the war against the Germans.³⁹ Imprisonment, bad treatment and the strenuousness of the journey had soon caused the death of six men, among them Uixamab.⁴⁰ This gave the German authorities the legitimate right to replace the removed leaders with new ones. While the missionaries of the Rhenish Mission Society blamed Uixamab and Swartbooi and disparagingly qualified their involvement in the war against the Germans as a matter of individual interest and ambitions,⁴¹ the colonial government, by contrast, presented it as a matter of collective rebellion and, as we saw, expropriated all tribal property.⁴²

Let us briefly summarise. The German colonial intervention in Sesfontein in 1906 was legitimised by the participation of the Topnaar leadership under Jan Uixamab in the colonial war of 1904. By 1906, the community of Sesfontein was seemingly impoverished, most people had left and dispersed into the bush. Colonial reports as well as those by the missionaries of the Rhenish Mission Society portray an image of an almost unpopulated area, where there was limited economic activity and, if anything, was under the control of Europeans, i.e. German, Portuguese or Boer. The reasons for Sesfontein's alleged involvement in the war and the means and resources they had used to do so remain unclear. In order to understand these events we will have to trace the history of Topnaar expansion into Kaoko and the formation of a specific socio-political dynamic, in which they established themselves as the dominant political group. This will enable us to assert that the expropriation of 1906 marked the low point of a gradual collapse of a society and its economic and political basis, a process in which German colonial intervention was but only one factor and, as I will argue, a rather marginal one at that. It was less the quality and strategy of colonial intervention that led to an end of Sesfontein's dominance in Kaoko. Rather it was a specific moment in time,

³⁹ RMG 2.499 a C/h 8 a, Franzfontein, Band 1, 1899–1906, Brockmann an die Deputation, Karibib, 6.3.1905.

⁴⁰ Uixamab died on the way to Outjo, Swartbooi in the prison in Okahanja, RMG 2.524 a C/h 39 a, Outjo (mit Franzfontein und Zesfontein), Band 1, 1906–1922, Visitationsbericht des Inspektor Spiecker über die Gemeinde Outjo, Outjo, 11.–18.6.1906.

⁴¹ RMG 2.524 a C/h 39 a, Outjo (mit Franzfontein und Zesfontein), Band 1, 1906–1922, Brockmann, Jahresbericht, Outjo, 30.8.1906.

⁴² The treatment of the Fransfontein community resembled that of Sesfontein: land and cattle was confiscated, the community was allowed to keep 2ha of garden land and a maximum of 500 piece of small stock, five mission evangelists were allowed to keep their large stock, and the district commander reserved the right to determine where people would be allowed to reside and to work. RMG 2.499 a C/h 8 a, Franzfontein, Band 1, 1899–1906, Abschrift. Gouvernementsverfügung die Neuordnung der Franzfonteiner Verhältnisse nach dem Aufstande betreffend, Outjo, 6.6.1906.

and a series of events preceding the 1904 war, which caused a dramatic reconfiguration of social and political conditions in the north-western area.

2. Male Business - raiding economies and commercial trade

2.1. The socio-economy of Kaoko in the second half of the 19th century

Throughout the first half of the 19th century expanding Oorlam groups originating from the Cape colony gradually established their economic and political predominance in central Namibia. Lau,⁴³ Henrichsen and Dederling⁴⁴ have given detailed accounts of the establishment of the local Nama and Herero societies based on raids of cattle and people by well-armed and mounted commandos, on the control of the regional trade routes to and from the Cape, on commercial hunting and on the occupation of natural resources such as grazing grounds and waterholes. Through this process a new system of production, exchange and tribute emerged linking the southern and central areas of the territory to the expanding colonial markets of the Cape colony. The products acquired by the raiding economy and feeding into the interregional trade system were those of cattle, ivory and ostrich feathers, which were exchanged for arms and ammunition, horses and ox-wagons—all items of male social status and socio-economic power. With changing parameters of trade and exchange, the significance of goods shifted. This was particularly the case with cattle, which was transformed from agricultural and social capital into a commodity and currency increasingly (although not exclusively) accumulated for commercial transactions. Growing revenues soon created rivalries. The penetration of European traders into what was then known as Namaqua- and Damaraland by the 1840s, as well as various armed confrontations with local Herero and Nama communities in the 1860s, challenged Oorlam political and economic hegemony⁴⁵ and eventually led to an expansion of raiding activity northwards. Kaoko became one destination of this moving frontier.⁴⁶ Since at least the mid-19th century, the region had offered alternative shelter to male and female migrants and refugees from various African communities in central Namibia, who had come under economic or social pressure, and competing territorial claims continued into the 1870s.⁴⁷ The unsettled status

⁴³ Lau, B. (1987), *Southern and Central Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner's Time*. Windhoek.

⁴⁴ Henrichsen, D. (1997), *Herrschaft und Identifikation im vorkolonialen Zentralnamibia. Das Herero- und Damaraland im 19. Jh.* Hamburg; Dederling (1997).

⁴⁵ Siiskonen, H. (1990), *Trade and Socioeconomic Change in Ovamboland, 1850–1906*. Helsinki, p. 96; Henrichsen (1997), pp. 157–159.

⁴⁶ Bollig, M. (1998a), Power and Trade in Precolonial and Early Colonial Northern Kaokoland. In Hayes et al, p. 176; Henrichsen (1997), p. 164.

⁴⁷ W.C. Palgrave made reference to these competing claims for Kaoko by Swartbooi and Herero leaders in central Namibia on his first and second commissions to the territory on behalf of the

of Kaoko as a territory underpinned the settlement of a first group of so-called Topnaar⁴⁸ in the area of Sesfontein⁴⁹ and of a second group named after its leading Swartbooi family at Fransfontein⁵⁰ in what was then southern Kaoko. It was Sesfontein in particular that would emerge as the economic and political centre of the north-western area in the 1870s and 1880s. In what follows, I will argue for and try to outline the establishment and configuration of an Oorlam society in Kaoko in the second half of the 19th century. To speak of and conceptualise the emerging communities in north-western Namibia in terms of Oorlam expansion reflects a serious concern with regard to the problematic assessment of ethnic identity lasting far into the 19th century. Ethnic identification of the Topnaar and Swartbooi leadership in Kaoko in the late 19th century in early colonial and missionary sources was ambiguous, and various terms were used to denote the groups living in and around Fransfontein and Sesfontein in that period.⁵¹ Dederling has convincingly shown how problematic the assessment of tribal units in early 19th century southern Namibia was, particularly with regard to the distinction between intruding Oorlam groups and local indigenous Nama communities.⁵² Early missionary reports from the area, which often based their ethnic histories on genealogies of chiefs, showed how difficult it was to define clear differences and assess whether members of the political elite emerged from indigenous groups or from immigrant ones.⁵³ As was the case in southern Namibia, the consolidation of a tribal narrative in Kaoko, which classified the newcomers as Nama and the indigenous population as a conglomerate of Herero, Bushman and Damara,⁵⁴ has to be read against the backdrop of a historical pro-

Cape Government in 1877 and 1878. See Stals, ELP (1991), *The Commissions of W.C. Palgrave. Special Emissary to South West Africa 1876–1885*. Cape Town, p. 64–65 and 221–222. These issues remain absent in the historiographical literature to date.

⁴⁸ Or!Gomen in Nama/Damara.

⁴⁹ Sesfontein is the Cape Dutch name used since the mid 19th century. Locally the place is known today as !nani/aus in Nama/Damara and Ohamuheke in Otjiherero. The official name continues to be Sesfontein.

⁵⁰ Sullivan, S. (1998), *People, plants and practice in drylands: socio-political and ecological dimensions of resource-use by Damara farmers in north-west Namibia*. London, p. 31. The author provides the Nama/Damara term for the Swartbooi group settling at Fransfontein in that period as being //Khou/gôan. In 1886 the Swartbooi population in Fransfontein was estimated to be around 200 people, NAN ZBU L.II a 4 Bd. 1060, Ältere Akten betr. Besiedlung und Beschreibung des Landes 1884–1895, Bericht von Goldammer über Dienstreise Mai–Juli nach Otjitambi 1886.

⁵¹ Hottentott (Nama), Herero/Damara, Bushman and Oorlam. In other words, up to the 1890s there is no coherent ethnic or tribal narrative in the sources.

⁵² Dederling (1997), p. 37.

⁵³ Dederling (1997), p. 20.

⁵⁴ For Nama in north-western Namibia the ethnographic narrative was decisively determined by the missionaries of the Rhenish Mission Society, such as Brockmann and Vedder and later by the work of the government anthropologist N.J. van Warmelo (1951) in his *Notes on the Kaokoveld (South West Africa) and its People*. Pretoria. For Namibia in general Dederling refers to Winifred Hoernlé's (1985) *The social organization of the Nama Hottentots of South West Africa*.

cess in which missionaries played a certain role, heavily influenced by the socio-economic transformation and the reconfiguration of political power constellations. The population in Sesfontein and Fransfontein in the late 19th century was neither homogenous in terms of ethnic identity, nor were the origins of the members of the emerging local elite evident. As we shall see, the period from the 1870s onwards saw the integration of various groups and communities living in Kaoko into a new socio-economy under leadership which gained *Oorlam status*.⁵⁵ Rather than dealing with a problem or phenomenon of the constitution of tribal group identity, we are concerned here with a period in which socio-economic predominance and hegemony, as well as territorial appropriation and exploitation, were being negotiated. These processes have not been addressed in the historiography on northern Namibia and southern Angola, nor were they systematically considered in current research on north-western Namibia.⁵⁶ The lack of research is mainly due to the fact that in the second half of the 19th century European presence in Kaoko, i.e. that of missionaries, settlers and commercial enterprises, was very much in contrast to southern and central Namibia - nearly non-existent - and correspondingly left but scattered vestiges in the available written archives. Only in the late 1890s would this situation change slightly. Interpreting these transformations as the emergence of an Oorlam society engages with a perspective, which doesn't treat Nama and Herero historiographies in north-western Namibia disparately from each other, but instead aims at integrating Kaoko's history into a *longue durée* of the expansion of raiding economies in southern Africa in general, and in Namibia in particular. The argument is supported by contemporary oral accounts from the north-western region in which Oorlam/Nama presence figures prominently, with significant variations and nuance depending on people's experiences during the period of raids and their aftermath.⁵⁷ Hence, while Oorlam rule changed the socio-political landscape of the entire region, on the ground its effects were discontinuous, both in time and space. In fact, the scale of integration into the raiding economy and into capitalised trade systems greatly depended on patterns of residence, on the accessibility of alternative goods, resources and allies, as well as on social status and gender. Likewise, local communities within Kaoko used multiple strategies to face the transformation of their social living spaces.

In Carstens, P. (ed.), *The social organization of the Nama and other essays by Winifred Hoernlé*. Johannesburg. Also see Moritz, W. (1987), *Die Swartboois in Rehoboth, Salem, Ameib und Franzfontein*. n.p.

⁵⁵ Dederling (1997), p. 52. According to Dederling Oorlam status includes a certain adaptation to European cultural standards, i.e. the Dutch language, basic tenets of Christianity, proficiency in the use of firearms, horses and ox-wagons. This definition is very useful for Kaoko, indeed.

⁵⁶ Michael Bollig's work on northern Kaoko remains the relevant exception.

⁵⁷ See Bollig (1997).

2.2. The territorial anchorage of Oorlam rule

A general historiographical problem arises with regard to the territorial anchorage of Oorlam rule in Kaoko in the second half of the 19th century concerns the power balance between Sesfontein and Fransfontein. Written narratives have privileged the Swartbooi leadership in Fransfontein, determined by that place's significance for early German colonial intervention and missionary expansion in north-western Namibia in the late 1890s.⁵⁸ Yet, conditions between the 1860s and the 1880s remain to be explored, not least because oral accounts concerning the period forgo hierarchical interpretations and mention various Oorlam leaders,⁵⁹ often not associating them with any one place in particular.⁶⁰ Based on these oral narratives and considering the geographical location of the centres of power, as well as their slightly different roles in the inner- and intraregional trade, I will pursue an interpretation which argues that Fransfontein and Sesfontein both expanded their commercial interests into Kaoko, yet Sesfontein dominated the process of territorial and socio-economic integration of the region and its inhabitants.⁶¹ The occupation of Sesfontein and its immediate surroundings by so-called Topnaar under the leadership of Anibab Hendrik /Uixamab⁶² had, as we shall see, various reasons among which were the peculiarities of geographical conditions. Situated on the banks of the Hoanib riverbed in the immediate vicinity of the Khowarib⁶³ gorge and marked by six fountains, it offered exceptionally favourable natural conditions in a semi-desert area. By the early 19th century the place had been a central site in a system of regional grazing grounds and waterholes, seasonally used both by local stock herders and hunting or gathering parties.⁶⁴ The arrival of /Uixamab and his followers, who had gradually found their way to Sesfontein from the Walvis Bay hinterland,⁶⁵ changed the patterns of settlement and resource management and led to the transformation of the

⁵⁸ As we shall see in Chapter 4.

⁵⁹ Such as e.g. narrated by Engombe Kapeke in Bollig (1997), p. 171.

⁶⁰ Michael Bollig's suggests Fransfontein overrule in Kaoko, although he acknowledges that the identity of Oorlam leaders remains unclear, Bollig, (1998a), p. 176 and there footnote 9.

⁶¹ While there is information on Fransfontein in the late 19th and early 20th century in reports of missionaries of the Rhenish Mission Society, no historical research on the place has been published up to date.

⁶² Van Warmelo (1951), p. 41. Van Warmelo's information stem from interviews he conducted in Sesfontein in the late 1940s. He gives no date for Anibab Hendrik /Uixamab's settlement at Sesfontein.

⁶³ Gowareb in Nama/Damara.

⁶⁴ Sullivan (1998), p. 31.

⁶⁵ Van Warmelo (1951), p. 41; Böhm, J. (1878), *Reise von Ameib nach Zesfontein. Der kleine Missionsfreund*, No. 5: pp. 67–80, here p. 67. Topnaar involvement in long distance trade with European traders went back to the 18th century, see: Kienetz, A. (1977), *The Key Role of the Oorlam Migrations in the Early Europeanization of South-West Africa (Namibia). The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 4: 553–572, here p. 558.

socio-political conditions. The emergence of Sesfontein as one of the Oorlam political and residential centres on the southern margins of the region comprised a series of measures. As had been the case in Damara- and Namaqualand, Oorlam political power relied on the accessibility of a workforce, both for subsistence agricultural production and for the raiding economy.⁶⁶ The newcomers did, however, attract people from the surrounding areas, as the emerging settlement offered new economic possibilities. The centralization of people at Sesfontein is depicted in oral accounts as well as in a few, mainly missionary, reports from the early 20th century.⁶⁷ It included people who had been living as hunters, herders and fishermen along the riverbeds towards the coast⁶⁸ or shifting between the various nearby waterholes.⁶⁹ While the settlement at Sesfontein involved forced removals of people on the one hand, and their consequent migration or flight⁷⁰ in cases where the living conditions would not improve,⁷¹ on the other, the incentives offered by the Sesfontein's growing socio-political significance determined the approach of many.⁷² The intensification of local agricultural production was one domain in which men and women found employment as dependent herders and garden workers⁷³ to cover growing subsistence needs in view of the increased population reaching ca. 500 around the late 1880s.⁷⁴ Young men were enrolled into commandos, with which they engaged in raids and hunting trips and supervised herds.⁷⁵ Dependent work relationships were but one level of integration; intermarriage and

⁶⁶ See Henrichsen (1997); Lau (1987).

⁶⁷ Interview with Louda //Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 17.12. & 28.12.2001, and with Fanuel //Hawaxab, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001. Missionaries making reference to early settlements at Sesfontein, among them Heinrich Vedder, are mentioned in Sullivan (1998), p. 31.

⁶⁸ Kuntz, J. (1913), Die geographischen Resultate der Kaokofeld Expedition 1910/12. *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde*: 439/40; NAN ZBU A VI a 3, Band 1, Jahresberichte des Nordbezirks, Jahresbericht 1894/95.

⁶⁹ ELCRN VII. 27.1. Franzfontein, letter of missionary Riechmann, n.d., where he estimates 500 people living at Sesfontein by the end of 1880s. NAN ZBU L.II a 4 Bd. 1060, Ältere Akten betr. Besiedlung und Beschreibung des Landes 1884–1895, Bericht von Waldemar Beck an den Generalkonsul, Otjim., 31.3.1885, „Meine Reise zu den Zwartboois“. Beck visited Otjitambi, one of the big waterholes in southern Kaoko occupied by Topnaar and Swartbooi families “under the leadership of Jan Uixamab”.

⁷⁰ Bollig (1997), p. 15.

⁷¹ Interview with August Kasaona, Sesfontein, 20.1.2002, and with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001.

⁷² Interview with Alfred Nai-Khaib, Sesfontein, 21.12.2001; Böhm (1878), p. 75.

⁷³ Oral information repeatedly refers to gardening under Oorlam rule, e.g. interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001, interview with Louda //Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 17.12.2001. This stands in contradiction to missionaries of the Rhenish mission society claiming to have introduced gardening in the area and reinforced by the literature, e.g. in Sullivan (1998), p. 52.

⁷⁴ Interview with Louda //Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 17.12.2001.

⁷⁵ Böhm (1878), p. 88 confirms that the integration of local people into hunting improved e.g. diet.

participation in the stock economy through loans and inheritance of cattle was another.⁷⁶ In particular, people's involvement in cattle rearing and participation in the appropriation of pastures and cattle posts as herders both guaranteed a share in economic accumulation and nurtured Oorlam claims to territorial conquest.⁷⁷ Through the 1860s and 1870s Oorlam influence in Kaoko spread from its southern centres towards the north. The raiding commandos gradually advanced into central Kaoko and appropriated water resources and pastures. The water holes in particular, such as Kaoko Otavi, constituted hubs of both agricultural production and game management and became pivot points for the territorial conquest.⁷⁸ The shifts in strategies of conquest depending on space intensified in the north-western part of Kaoko and in southern Angola, which were drawn into the Oorlam raiding economy by the 1880s.⁷⁹ Indirect rule, i.e. political alliances gained significance. Oral and written accounts most prominently refer to Kakurukouje⁸⁰ of Ombepera who, as we shall see, negotiated the terms of rule and control in northern Kaoko with the Oorlam leadership and at least managed to maintain his position in the region. The claim to water-resources and grazing grounds continued; Jan /Uixamab, who followed his brother as Captain of Sesfontein in the early 1870s⁸¹ is said to have controlled cattle posts up to the Kunene River.⁸² Yet, what characterised Oorlam presence in northern Kaoko and southern Angola were the raids, and most oral accounts from this part of the region stress the violent appropriation of cattle and the deportation of people.⁸³ One of the few written accounts from the late 19th century referring to these raids comes from the Swedish traveller Möller, who visited the Angolan coastal town of Mossamedes in 1895.⁸⁴ He writes his narrative from a colonial per-

⁷⁶ Ngendepi in Bollig (1997), p. 144; Meredith McKittrick makes a similar point for western Owambo, see McKittrick, M. (2002), *To Dwell Secure. Generation, Christianity and Colonialism in Ovamboland*. Portsmouth, Oxford, Cape Town, pp. 59 & 60.

⁷⁷ Lau (1987), p. 23, for central and southern Namibia.

⁷⁸ NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 vol 1, Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, Sanitatas, nördliches Kaokoveld, 15.9.1900.

⁷⁹ Duparquet, C. (1953), *Viagens Na Cimbebasia*. Luanda, p. 121; Möller, P. (1974), *Journey in Africa through Angola, Ovampoland and Damaraland*. Cape Town, p. 50.

⁸⁰ Referred to in most written documents as Kasupi.

⁸¹ Van Warmelo (1951), p. 41.

⁸² NAN ZBU 2030 W II d 25 Bd. 1, Salomon Richter, Outjo, 21.6.1898.

⁸³ Katjira Muniombara I in Bollig (1997), p. 39ff.; Henrichsen has referred to the structural link between raiding cattle and deporting people, particularly women and children, to be used as workers, Henrichsen (1997), p. 151.

⁸⁴ There is an older reference "Hottentot raids" into south-western Angola from 1883 by Earl of Mayo (1883) in his *A Journey from Mossamedes to the River Cunene, S.W. Africa. Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Records of Geography*, New Monthly Series, Vol. 5, No. 8: 458–473, here p. 465. J. Chapman too described these raids in the late 1880s, stating that Oorlam raiders from Sesfontein reached the plantations in the Mossamedes hinterland, NAN A. 233, William Chapman, "An account of the entry of the Trek-Boers into Angola.", p. 39. See also

spective, which saw the raiders as colonialism's biggest enemy;⁸⁵ however, it nevertheless illustrates the scale and extension of Oorlam raiding activities in the 1880s:

In parties up to a hundred persons these feared foreigners advance through the country; all are excellent marksmen and as they are also mounted on horses or riding-oxen, they travel fast and appear unexpectedly, today here, tomorrow there, everywhere robbing the natives of their cattle and killing people. When it finally becomes too hot for them, when the natives and whites are too close on their tracks, they collect their booty, often consisting of several thousand cattle, drive them southwards by forced marches, pass the Kunene and then disappear in the desert areas of the Kaokoveld. As long as the stolen cattle last, they live sumptuously, thereafter to repeat their visit to the rich 'Portuguese land' up there on the other side of the Kunene.⁸⁶

The extension of raids towards the east remains much more elusive, as both the historiography available and oral reports only provide a very general image.⁸⁷ Ambitions of Oorlam commandos to expand into Owambo from the south, such as was known of Jonker Afrikaner in the 1860s,⁸⁸ had remained without success, yet it had nurtured a growing awareness for the potential threats posed by the well-armed southern rivals among the northern Namibian polities of Ondonga and Kwanyama.⁸⁹ While there is indication that the Oorlam attempted to extend their influence from Kaoko towards Owambo, these activities seem to have been discontinuous and did not gain territory.⁹⁰ Raids might have affected the most western Owambo communities, i.e. Ongandjera and Uukwaluudhi, if they hadn't usually been thwarted on the margins of the spheres of influence of the expansionist Ondonga and Kwanyama of the central plains.⁹¹ Indeed, it seems there was a general spread of the raiding economy in the context of expanding commercial trade in vast parts of the northern territories⁹² and, by the 1880s, the directions and spatial radiations of these violent incursions varied. Oral accounts from Kaoko describe a situation of general confusion and insecurity in

Hayes, P. (1992), *A History of the Owambo of Namibia, ca. 1880 to 1935*. Cambridge, p. 75. Mosamedes is today the coastal city of Namibe.

⁸⁵ Möller (1974), p. 33.

⁸⁶ Möller (1974), p. 33 & 34.

⁸⁷ The historiography on Owambo concentrates on the centralized polities of the central planes, particularly Oukwanyama and Ondonga.

⁸⁸ Henrichsen (1997), p. 148; McKittrick quotes from oral information on Nama raids to Ndonga in the 1860s, McKittrick (2002), p. 74.

⁸⁹ McKittrick (2002), p. 52.

⁹⁰ Hayes (1992), p. 76, argues that there have been no significant raids into Owambo and that eventually raids remained on the region's periphery.

⁹¹ Hayes (1992), p. 91, on expanding Owambo polities in the mid 1880s.

⁹² McKittrick (2002), pp. 57 and 71–73; Hayes (1992), p. 91.

which raiders were identified as Oorlam commandos, parties from neighbouring communities within the region, as well as from western Owambo.⁹³

2.3. Raiding, hunting and long-distance trade

Beyond covering subsistence needs, the raiding economy most importantly aimed to introduce cattle into transregional trade, and to exchange them for arms, ammunition, and consumer goods such as clothes, metal products, beads and alcohol. Evidence suggests the integration of Kaoko into the long-distance trade followed and transformed existing paths of older and more localised exchange.⁹⁴ There is an established historiography on long-distance trade in southern and central Namibia, as well as on the involvement of the centralised Owambo polities in northern Namibia and southern Angola in the second half of the 19th century.⁹⁵ Yet by contrast, little attention has been given to Kaoko's role in these commercial networks.⁹⁶ While oral information provides some insights, the scale and terms of trade, the agents involved, routes used and the changes over time often remain unclear.⁹⁷ Characteristic for the region, and strikingly different from developments in the southern and central areas of the territory, was the absence of European missionaries as agents of trade, and Kaoko's continuing wealth in game, attracted both European and African hunters from the 1870s onward.⁹⁸ Indeed, cattle and game products such as ivory and ostrich feathers constituted the main commodities and guaranteed access to long-distance trade, meant to satisfy the Oorlam demand for guns, ammunition and horses.⁹⁹ It was the establishment of the long-distance trade that changed Kaoko's connections to different areas and markets. What in fact set the terms for the region's integration was the peculiar geographical location on the western margin of the territory, between the two most important export harbours on the coast, i.e. Walvis Bay to the south and Mossamedes to the north, and with the proximity to Owambo as the driving force for interregional trade in the area in the 19th century.¹⁰⁰ It is this commercial triangle, which – as I will argue – established the pattern of Oorlam rule in Kaoko in terms of its function as intermediary space, rather than as significant regional market on its own.

⁹³ Böhm (1878), p. 91. Clarence Smith makes a similar point for southern Angola in the same period, Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 84.

⁹⁴ McKittrick (2002), p. 52, makes a similar point for Owambo.

⁹⁵ Siiskonen (1990); Clarence-Smith (1979); Hayes (1992); McKittrick (2002).

⁹⁶ Michael Bollig (1997) has repeatedly referred to this, with a focus on northern Kaoko.

⁹⁷ Hayes (1992), p. 84 makes a similar point for Owambo, where sources make it difficult to quantify long-distance trade and rates of exchange.

⁹⁸ Böhm (1878), p. 75; Siiskonen (1990), p. 121; Nitsche, G. (1913), *Ovamboland. Versuch einer landeskundlichen Darstellung nach dem gegenwärtigen Stand unserer geographischen Kenntnis*. Kiel, p. 18; Hayes (1992), p. 74.

⁹⁹ Henrichsen (1997), p. 149.

¹⁰⁰ Henrichsen (1997), p. 138.

2.3.1. North-western trade routes and the linkage to Walvis Bay

As mentioned above, Oorlam expansion into Kaoko was linked to the growing political challenges and economic rivalries they had faced in central Namibia. Beyond this, their trajectory towards the north-west corresponded with expanding commercial trade interest in the region.¹⁰¹ The most sought after commodity was game, and hunters from Walvis Bay, where exports of ivory and ostrich feathers had flourished since the 1840s, began to show keen interest in the areas north-west and north of Outjo, where game stocks were still abundant. Siiskonen¹⁰² has referred to the increasing importance of trade routes to the north along the western side of the Etosha pan beginning in the 1860s, without specifying the trajectories or, most importantly, who the traders were, i.e. Europeans or Africans. One main route linking the Walvis Bay area and the north-western region ran through Fransfontein and proceeded via Okaukuejo along the Etosha pan to Ondonga and Ongandjera. Indeed, this was the main wagon route at the time.¹⁰³ Another route extended via Otjivazandu, Khowarib and Sesfontein through Kaoko Otavi to the north or eastward, depending on the size of hunting and trading parties and the means of transport.¹⁰⁴ Early missionary reports give a vague idea of African hunting in the area in the late 1870s. When the catholic missionary Carlos Duparquet reached western Etosha in 1879, he met numerous hunters at places such as Otjivazandu and Ombombo, which he described as nodes of north-south and east-west trade routes.¹⁰⁵ Regardless of the traders' identity, their goods or transport means, Oorlam settlement at Fransfontein and Sesfontein in the 1860s fits into the trajectories of trade and enabled the control and taxation of people and goods.¹⁰⁶ When Axel Eriksson and Charles John Andersson ventured towards Kaoko in the late 1860s aiming to find a way to the Kunene River, they failed for lack of knowledge of routes and water resources.¹⁰⁷ James Chapman was more successful in his several hunting trips to Kaoko and western Owambo

¹⁰¹ Böhm (1878), p. 75.

¹⁰² Siiskonen (1990), p. 113.

¹⁰³ NAN A. 233, W.J. Chapman, "An account of the entry of the Trek-Boers into Angola.", p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ NAN ZBU 1011 JXIIb5, Vol. 2, Rosendahl, "Bericht über eine vom 24.6.–5.7.07 von Sessfontein nach Anabis-Ombombo-Gaimubas – ausgeführte Dienstreise", Sessfontein, 9.7.1907; NAN ZBU J XIII B 3, vol. 3, 1898–1903, "Bericht über die Reise des Oberleutnant von Winkler in den Monaten August bis Mitte November 1901 durch das Ovamboland und den südöstlichen Theil der Provinz Angola.", 1901, p. 6 on the route Sesfontein–Outjo; NAN ZBU 1011 JXII b 5, Band 1, geographische und ethnographische Forschungen. Kaokofeld, 1895–1897, Distriktchef Rosendahl, Bericht über Dienstreise in Kaoko Zesfontein, 9.7.1906.

¹⁰⁵ Duparquet (1953), p. 118.

¹⁰⁶ Siiskonen (1990), p. 142. Unfortunately the author makes no reference to archival sources and yet limits his argument to Fransfontein.

¹⁰⁷ Nitsche (1913), pp. 17 & 18; Stals, ELP & Otto-Reiner, A. (1999), *Oorlog en Vrede aan die Kunene*. Windhoek, p. 21.

in the 1870s.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, the expansion of Transvaal Boers into Kaoko in the same decade went hand in hand with their active involvement in commercial hunting.¹⁰⁹ While there is only little information on how the increasing number of hunters in Kaoko negotiated the terms of their activities within the region,¹¹⁰ the strategic position of Oorlam settlements, their knowledge of the country and their access to arms favoured their claim to control the business with game.¹¹¹ Oral accounts support this line of argument and illustrate the involvement of local people in commercial hunting and the ways they made use of emerging opportunities.¹¹² Men in particular, with their knowledge of hunting paths in the area, of game stocks and their distribution, enrolled as guides and hunters in parties organized under Oorlam or Boer leadership.¹¹³ For their services they would receive meat, clothes and occasionally weapons.¹¹⁴ While the scale of game products leaving Kaoko towards Walvis Bay remains unclear, the coastal town's significance as an important destination for ivory and ostrich feathers up to the 1880s most probably constituted one of the main potential outlets of Oorlam trading activities in the first two decades after their settlement in the region, not least due to their provenance from the south.¹¹⁵ Sesfontein in particular benefited from its geographic location as a regional link to the Walvis Bay area through a variety of coastal routes that lay beyond rival European access.¹¹⁶ Fransfontein, on the other hand,

¹⁰⁸ Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 51.

¹⁰⁹ Duparquet (1953), pp. 159ff; NAN A. 233, Chapman, "An account of the entry of the Trek-Boers into Angola.", p. 5; Bollig (1997), p. 17; Möller (1974), p. 36; NAN ZBU J XIII B 3, vol. 3, 1898–1903, "Bericht über die Reise des Oberleutnant von Winkler in den Monaten August bis Mitte November 1901 durch das Ovamboland und den südöstlichen Theil der Provinz Angola.", 1901, p. 20; NAN A 560, Diary of Viktor Franke, unpublished transcription, Vol. 2, January 1901 to August 1902, pp. 180–182.

¹¹⁰ Palgrave quotes information given by Kambonde at Okahandja in 1880, referring to the entrepreneur Henry Seymore Carew operating his hunting business in Kaoko through an African middleman and hunter in Sesfontein, see Stals (1991), p. 336; Eriksson refers to trade cooperation in Kaoko and southern Angola between Africans and Boers or Europeans, see Rudner, I. & J. (2006), *Axel Wilhelm Eriksson of Hereroland (1846–1901). His Life and Letters*. Windhoek, pp. 89 & 192.

¹¹¹ Henrichsen makes a similar point for central Namibia, see Henrichsen (1997), p. 164.

¹¹² Interviews with August Kasaona, Sesfontein, 20.1.2002, Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001, Fanuel //Hawaxab, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001. See also NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 vol 1, *Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia, 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann*, 15.9.1900.

¹¹³ Earl of Mayo (1883), pp. 458–473, describes these common hunting ventures for southern Angola and e.g. refers to "Hottentots and Griqua hunters" employed by A.W. Eriksson, p. 466.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001; Tjambiru Tjikumbamba in Bollig (1997), p. 128; Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999) who mention A.W. Eriksson's and W. J. C. Chapman's collaborations with local guides.

¹¹⁵ Clarence Smith (1979), p. 67 makes this point for Oorlam in southern Angola.

¹¹⁶ Later German explorations of paths and routes through Kaoko sustain this argument. See NAN ZBU 149 A VI a 3 Band 6, *Jahresberichte 1900/1901*, Oberleutnant Viktor Franke, *Jahresbericht des Distrikts Zessfontein für die Zeit vom 1.4.1901 bis 31.3.1902*, Outjo, 16.6.1902.

distinguished itself by being situated both on the north-south trajectory, i.e. along the road from Omaruru to Owambo, as well as in proximity to the routes leading to the eastern market of Grootfontein.¹¹⁷ Henrichsen has described in depth the variety of networks on which trade was based and the coexistence of various forms of trade in central Namibia in the mid-19th century.¹¹⁸ The ongoing accessibility of these southern networks, involving African and European traders alike, was important for Sesfontein's and Fransfontein's access to guns, ammunition and horses in order to guarantee their mobility and their control of people and resources in their north-western area of expansion.¹¹⁹ Trade to the south came under serious pressure by 1879/80, when the consequences of armed conflicts between the central Namibian Herero and Nama-Oorlam leaders were increasingly felt.¹²⁰ In view of these fights, the Cape government forbade the import of arms through Walvis Bay¹²¹ and, although the circulation of arms continued in the southern and central parts of the territory via inland routes, Walvis Bay probably lost some of its attraction as a market for Kaoko's Oorlam elite since arms could be acquired elsewhere. Furthermore, the hazardous nature of trade activities in the war area forced many of the European traders, such as Eriksson, to move northwards in order to revitalise their collapsing enterprises.¹²² Nevertheless, trade from Kaoko to the coast probably went on, as the region continued to be a supplier of both game products and cattle, which had become a sought after commodity during and in the aftermath of the conflicts in the central areas of the territory.¹²³ The changing conditions for trade with the southern areas led to what we might term task sharing between Fransfontein and Sesfontein. The difficulties faced had a different impact on the two settlements, and the accessibility of alternative markets depended on the geographical location. In fact, the weakening of the southern trade flow, which would increase through the 1880s and particularly in the 1890s with growing German colonial intervention, gradually led to the predominance of Sesfontein in Kaoko, both with regard to raiding and trading. Only later would missionary and German colonial privileging of the Fransfontein leadership reframe this balance.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ Miescher (2009), pp. 63ff.

¹¹⁸ Henrichsen (1997), pp. 158ff.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001.

¹²⁰ Siiskonen (1990), p. 130; NAN A. 233, Chapman, "An account of the entry of the Trek-Boers into Angola", p. 16, referring to difficulties faced by the war leading parties to buy arms and horses.

¹²¹ Siiskonen (1990), p. 136.

¹²² See Rudner (2006), p. 106; NAN A. 233, Chapman, "An account of the entry of the Trek-Boers into Angola", p. 16.

¹²³ We can only speculate on Kaoko's role as a provider of cattle to communities in central Namibia re-pastoralisation after the warlike conflicts in the 1880s. See Henrichsen (1997), pp. 180ff.

¹²⁴ NAN ZBU 146 A VI a 3 Vol. 1, annual reports 1891/95, report of 1894/95; Böhm (1878), pp. 67–80.

2.3.2. Cattle and game products for the Mossamedes market

Written information on trade and exchange linking northern Kaoko and southern Angola before Oorlam expansion is not available and oral accounts mostly refer to the significance of eastern trade with Owambo.¹²⁵ Socio-economic relations between the regions north and south of the Kunene River were most probably based on cattle rearing and the circulation of stock according to inheritance and based on various forms of social bonds.¹²⁶ The shifts in trade with southern Angola were hence very much linked to Oorlam expansion. As Oorlam influence and control spread northwards, their interest in northern trade networks grew. The coastal towns of Benguela and Mossamedes gave the main incentives for trade linking southern Angola and northern Namibia through the 19th century.¹²⁷ While both ports competed in controlling commercial activities from the southern hinterland, particularly the ivory trade with Kwanyama, Mossamedes was the main destination for products originating from Kaoko.¹²⁸ Oorlam presence in the border area was discontinuous and significantly weaker than in the south. Trade most probably functioned through European and African middlemen and might occasionally have been direct¹²⁹ with traders and hunters entering the Kunene River area from the north.¹³⁰ This was increasingly the case from the 1880s onwards, when the settlement of Boers in the region of Humpata changed the infrastructural conditions for trade in southern Angola and wagon transport grew.¹³¹ One of the early accounts of commercial hunting in Kaoko is a secret report by Georg Hartmann, written in Sanitatas in southern Kaoko.¹³² Hartmann was told by informants in Sesfontein about Portuguese hunters, who usually spent several months (August to November) at Otjijand-jasemo, a significant water-place in northern Kaoko. Depending on the Kunene's water level and on the quality of roads, these hunters would either enter the region with their ox-wagons or would cross the Kunene on horseback. Well-armed and supported by large numbers

¹²⁵ Interview with Ngakurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002; Katjira III in Bollig (1997). Katjira refers to small-scale ivory trade to southern Angola, yet without specifying the period.

¹²⁶ Bollig (1997), p. 17; McKittrick makes a similar point for Owambo, McKittrick (2002), p. 70.

¹²⁷ Siiskonen (1990) and Clarence-Smith (1979) both ignore Kaoko in this context. See NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 vol.1, *Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia 1898–1907*, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, Sanitatas, nördliches Kaokoveld, 15.9.1900.

¹²⁸ Bollig (1997) in the introduction; interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavarara, Kaoko Otavi/Onjette, 10.1.2002, interview with Ngakurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002.

¹²⁹ Möller (1974), p. 24; Clarence-Smith (1979), pp. 58ff.

¹³⁰ Ngendepi Muharukua in Bollig (1997), p. 233.

¹³¹ Clarence Smith (1979), p. 26; Esser, M. (1897), *Meine Reise nach dem Kunene im nördlichen Grenzgebiet von Deutsch Südwestafrika. Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, Bd. 24, p.104; NAN A. 233, W.J.C. Chapman, "An account of the entry of the Trek-Boers into Angola.", p. 15.

¹³² NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 vol 1, *Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia 1898–1907*, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, 15.9.1900.

of African carriers and guides from southern Angola and from Kaoko, they would shoot up to 100 elephants all over the area and collect their loot at Otjijandjasemo.¹³³

Portuguese and Boer presence in the area generated additional means of income and new options for many ordinary men to access arms, whilst increasingly rivalling Oorlam hegemonic claims to trade. Clarence-Smith has referred to the influx of colonial traders and hunters to southern Angola in the late 1870s and 1880s and the gradual crowding out of African rivals, particularly when the latter lacked access to transport means and modern hunting technology.¹³⁴ Yet, while Portuguese and Boer businessmen figured prominently, trade continued to involve people of various and mixed descent, including Oorlam from the south.¹³⁵ Up until the mid-19th century, game in southern Angola had satisfied the demand for ivory and other products, but by the 1860s stocks had been depleted in most of the region and traders began to direct their interest towards Kaoko and Owambo.¹³⁶ Again, the terms and scale of trade with cattle, ivory and ostrich feathers from Kaoko remain unclear. Boer and Portuguese traders organized transport to Mossamedes¹³⁷ and exports of ivory reached a new peak in the 1880s.¹³⁸ These ventures, which made use of wagons, arms and the means to recruit dependent guides and helpers, could easily turn into raids and appropriate cattle herds on their way.¹³⁹ In contrast to the business with game, the majority of cattle supplied for export via Mossamedes originated from African producers¹⁴⁰ and continuously involved European and African sellers as intermediaries. Oorlam commandos from Kaoko who bartered their raided stock to traders¹⁴¹ no doubt favoured the intensification of cattle exports through Mossamedes in the 1880s and early 1890s.¹⁴² The linkage to Mossamedes again guaranteed access to arms thereby providing for one central asset of Oorlam rule in the region. The influx of arms most probably continued despite the prohibition of

¹³³ A similar reference is given by Eriksson, who had a hunting camp south of the Kunene in the 1890s. Rudner (2006), p. 192.

¹³⁴ Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 62. Palgrave quotes from an interview with Kamaherero in 1880 on problems in Kaoko with commercial, particularly Boer hunters. See Stals (1991), p. 338.

¹³⁵ Clarence-Smith refers to commercial settlements of "Rehoboth Basters" in southern Angola in the 1880s, i.e. Swartbooi traders, which had left the Rehoboth area in the mid-1860s and had gradually made their way northwards. See Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 47. On the emigration out of Rehoboth see Palgrave in Stals (1991), p. 8.

¹³⁶ NAN ZBU J XIII B 3, Vol. 3, 1898–1903, "Bericht über die Reise des Oberleutnant von Winkler in den Monaten August bis Mitte November 1901 durch das Ovamboland und den südöstlichen Theil der Provinz Angola," p. 20; Siiskonen (1990), p. 102.

¹³⁷ Möller (1974), p. 23; Siiskonen (1990), p. 146ff; Clarence-Smith (1979), pp. 26 & 27.

¹³⁸ Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 27.

¹³⁹ McKittrick makes a similar point for Owambo, see McKittrick (2002), p. 57.

¹⁴⁰ Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 26.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Louda //Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001; Ngendepi Muharukua in Bollig (1997), p. 232.

¹⁴² Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 59.

trade through Mossamedes in 1887¹⁴³ and depended less on quality criteria, which had advantaged arms originating from Walvis Bay in Owambo.¹⁴⁴ Later, during the 1890s when pressures from the German colonial government would force the Portuguese administration to intensify their supervision of the arms trade, Kaoko's remote location and the lower accessibility of its trade routes boosted the barter economy, which intensified all over southern Angola and northern Namibia.¹⁴⁵ The products specific for the northern trade were clothes, beads and, most of all, alcohol,¹⁴⁶ which increasingly figured as an import commodity to the territory by the late 1880s. Oral information very much underlines the continuity of alcohol imports to Kaoko from Angola far beyond the period of Oorlam rule¹⁴⁷ and, not least, the absence of missionaries, who continuously advocated for effective sanctions against the business in Owambo,¹⁴⁸ increased Kaoko's function as a target and intermediary market for the Portuguese traders.

2.3.3. Trade relations with Owambo

Continuous and differentiated trade networks to western Owambo and to Ondonga and Kwanyama linked Kaoko to its eastern neighbours throughout the 19th century. Both written sources and oral information identify "old" objects of trade¹⁴⁹ and refer to local African trade based on the exchange of stock, tobacco, corn, metal products and ivory, which continued into the period of commercialisation. Traders from Owambo, both as individuals or in groups, regularly came to Kaoko and to the southern areas to purchase cattle.¹⁵⁰ Ivory was part of these early intraregional exchange relations too, albeit in much smaller quantities. Ivory was predominantly used as an ornament, in ritual contexts, and as a sign of chiefly power.¹⁵¹ When Charles Andersson and Francis Galton visited Owambo in the late 1850s, Kaoko's supplies of ivory reached at least as far as Ongandjera.¹⁵² The western Owambo communities dominated these trade relations.¹⁵³ They negotiated their own trade interests, but also acted as intermediaries linking Kaoko to the big markets of Ondonga and

¹⁴³ Siiskonen (1990), p. 151.

¹⁴⁴ Siiskonen (1990), p. 131.

¹⁴⁵ Siiskonen (1990), p. 181.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002.

¹⁴⁷ Louda //Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 17.12.2001, and Fanuel //Hawaxab, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001.

¹⁴⁸ Siiskonen (1990), p. 134.

¹⁴⁹ Bollig (1997); interview with Ngakurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002; Andersson based on Frederick Green, in Andersson, C.J., *Notes of Travel in South Africa*. Cape Town, 1969, p. 154.

¹⁵⁰ Henrichsen (1997), p. 140.

¹⁵¹ McKittrick (2002), p. 55.

¹⁵² Henrichsen (1997), p. 176.

¹⁵³ Siiskonen (1990), p. 85.

Kwanyama.¹⁵⁴ Oral information on pre-colonial trade to the east does not address issues of confined trade flows and the predominance of particular trade partners.¹⁵⁵ While the significance of geographic proximity might have played a role, trade often relied on kinship and long-standing social affiliations and loyalties, which linked mobile communities over long distances.¹⁵⁶ The integration of Kaoko into the long-distance trade, particularly through commercial hunting, again led to shifts in the parameters of trade with its eastern neighbours and the composition of commodities exchanged. Yet, a chronological narrative that might attach dates to these transformations and estimate the scale of trade is difficult due to insufficient archival information. Importantly, the main agents of trade were Africans and some of the goods involved, e.g. alcohol, would condition trade to remain beyond the control of European traders and missionaries and hence beyond colonial supervision. The significance of Kaoko's links to its eastern neighbours changed with commercial trade, but it was rooted less in the occurrence of "new" goods than in its function as an additional connection to the north, particularly in the 1880s. Sesfontein's control of the southern and central parts of the region enabled the Oorlam leadership to sustain trade with Owambo and indirectly to participate in exports to southern Angola via the main trade routes. Kaoko's strength still lay in its richness in game and stock and hence in its capacity to use these in exchange for long-distance trade commodities from Owambo. As we saw, acquisition of arms and horses had been among the main incentives for involvement in commercial trade with the north from the 1860s onwards. Yet, the circulation of arms and their deployment in commercial hunting and increasingly in the extraction of cattle within and between Owambo communities had led to a gradual depletion of stocks and steady expansion of raids.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, by the 1870s, traders complained that there was no longer enough ivory and cattle to buy in Owambo.¹⁵⁸ The need to access these products might have led to violent incursions by raiding parties as far as Kaoko,¹⁵⁹ yet trade remained a strategy to access cattle and ivory. Oral information refers to the significance of Owambo as the source of arms,¹⁶⁰ horses and alcohol increasingly bartered in the area neighbouring Sesfontein, Kaoko Otavi and the Etosha

¹⁵⁴ McKittrick (2002), p. 55; Nitsche, G. (1913), *Ovamboland. Versuch einer landeskundlichen Darstellung nach dem gegenwärtigen Stand unserer geographischen Kenntnis*. Kiel, p. 18.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, 4.1.2002.

¹⁵⁶ McKittrick (2002), p. 55, based on Duparquet.

¹⁵⁷ McKittrick (2002), p. 53; Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 76; Hayes (1992), p. 91ff.

¹⁵⁸ McKittrick (2002), p. 55.

¹⁵⁹ Böhm (1878), p. 91; Engombe Kapeke in Bollig (1997), p. 186 makes a reference to cattle posts of Owambo kings in Kaoko, which probably drew from raided stock in part. Siiskonen (1990) and MacKittrick (2002) at least mention western Owambo communities as targets of raids without considering areas beyond.

¹⁶⁰ Ngendepi Muharukua in Bollig (1997), p. 158. See also NAN ZBU 147 A VI a 3, Band 2, Jahresberichte 1896/97, Jahresbericht, 28.6.1897.

pan.¹⁶¹ Still, the trajectories of trade and the agents involved remain elusive, and sales might have gone through various intermediaries, including Boer hunters. Throughout the 1870s the business with ivory from the northern areas both to Mossamedes and to Walvis Bay flourished, and cattle exports to the Angolan coast increased in the 1880s.¹⁶² It is again the particular geographic location of the region and the colonial sanctioning of the arms trade that might have changed Oorlam positions and interests in trade with Owambo. Smuggling became a common means of supply for arms,¹⁶³ and by the 1890s the scope and scale of Oorlam involvement in the underground trade would trouble the SWA colonial administration in the making.¹⁶⁴

2.4. Evaluating Oorlam rule in Kaoko between the 1860s and the 1890s

Oorlam expansion into Kaoko in the 1860s historically coincided with and nurtured the increased commercial interest in the region and its animal resources. In this sense, the Topnaar and Swartbooi settlements at Sesfontein and Fransfontein marked the advancement of a socio-economic frontier which gradually drew the north-western communities into their sphere of influence. In the process of expansion and appropriation, Oorlam rule remained a spatial variable, with its territorial anchorage in the southern and some parts of central Kaoko and a stronger focus on raiding in northern Kaoko and southern Angola. The sustainability of Oorlam claims to rule and control resources and people depended on their high level of mobility (using horses and oxen) and on their arms. Furthermore, the socio-economic integration of local communities into agricultural production through intermarriage and involvement in the accumulation of cattle covered both subsistence needs and enforced socio-political loyalties. Yet, their gradual expansion and its detrimental impact on resources and people were both the cause and result of the region's integration into the capitalised economies of the long-distance trade. This process was significantly shaped by the specific geographic location of Kaoko in what has been termed a commercial triangle, including the southern coastal town of Walvis Bay and the northern Angolan town of Mossamedes and the big markets of Owambo. The region remained beyond the main trade routes, particularly those to the north, yet it was this marginality which allowed for alternative forms of trade and followed paths and routes which were less accessible to European rivals. We should exercise caution in any attempt to arrange the scattered written and oral information

¹⁶¹ Interviews with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001, August Kasaona, Sesfontein, 20.1.2002, Louda //Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001.

¹⁶² Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 58; Möller (1974), p. 18.

¹⁶³ Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 18.

¹⁶⁴ Siiskonen (1990), p. 181; NAN ZBU 1011 JXIIb5, Vol. 2, Abschrift. Anlage zum Gesandtschaftsbrief, Lissabon, 12.5.1901.

on Oorlam rule in the second half of the 19th century into a chronological narrative. In the early period of Oorlam expansion into Kaoko, their links to the central and southern areas of the territory probably favoured Sesfontein's and Fransfontein's commercial and territorial endeavours. By the 1880s, both written and oral accounts suggest a stronger adjustment of interests to the north and to the east, leading to Sesfontein's increased significance as a regional centre. The configuration of Oorlam rule in Kaoko and the reconstruction of the socio-economic changes it entailed indeed acquire further layers of meaning from oral accounts about their impact on various local communities in Kaoko and, to a lesser extent, from written documentation produced in the course of late 19th century colonial and missionary expansion into the region.

Many aspects remain unclear. It is difficult to account for the impact the expansion of commercial trade and the raiding economy had on Kaoko's pastoral production. In view of the relative stability of Oorlam rule in the region, one has to question why the raiding economy did not lead to a collapse of the pastoral economy or how a more or less constant flow of livestock could be sustained. The limited archival sources and oral information do not allow for a definitive answer, although they provide some indication. While commercial trade no doubt put the region's agricultural production and resource management under serious pressure, there was a structural limit to its disruptiveness. The integration and usurpation of existing trade networks (as shown above) and minimal revenues to the regional pastoral production through the compensation of agricultural labourers and herders with livestock appear to have been strategies to prevent a socio-economic collapse. Other factors were linked to the ways the region's population negotiated the new situation.

3. Facing the raiding economy

3.1. Male mercenaries and collective strategies of survival

The three decades of Oorlam rule in Kaoko and the gradual expansion of the raiding economy over the area did have a significant and, at times, detrimental impact on the regional economy as it led to dramatic processes of accumulation on the one hand and impoverishment on the other.¹⁶⁵ Significant for the shifts in the allocation of resources was, as has been said, the uneven accessibility of arms, i.e. Oorlam monopoly on new technologies of power. Beyond the realm of the cattle economy, arms changed the management of game stock in the region. Ivory and other game products did indeed guarantee Kaoko's relevance for commercial business, and while pressure on game stocks increased significantly, com-

¹⁶⁵ See Henrichsen (1997), pp. 136 & 146 for central Namibia.

mercial hunting continued to be an option within the spectrum of economic differentiation. Arms, horses, militarised commandos, raids and hunting parties implicitly suggest a male pattern of agency.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, the socio-economic reorganization featured men, and particularly young men, very prominently; yet, the question of gender remains to be explored — how processes of transformation and the shifting significance of resources, objects and commodities, constituted social and gender roles.¹⁶⁷ Generally speaking, local communities responded to Oorlam expansion in Kaoko in two ways leading either to some sort of socio-political integration or to emigration and flight to neighbouring areas. Aspects of local impact have been suggested above; still, there is space for a more detailed interpretation.

3.2. Integration and political affiliation within Kaoko

Oorlam presence in Kaoko was felt most immediately in the southern parts of the region. As mentioned earlier, the settlement of /Uixamab and his followers at Sesfontein changed the socio-political landscape significantly through the centralization of people, the intensification of agricultural production, the accumulation of stock and the appropriation of water and grazing resources. Yet, bearing in mind the shifts with regard to the circulation of goods and commodities, particularly cattle and arms, how did this transformation affect social and in particular gender relations? McKittrick has referred to the emergence of a male culture of imported goods in mid-19th century Owambo, with guns as its centrepiece.¹⁶⁸ Yet, the impact of new goods and their hierarchical distribution within society affected men and women alike, although in different ways.

3.2.1. Gendered labour divisions in subsistence production and in the raiding economy

The subsistence economy in Sesfontein under Oorlam leadership relied on stock rearing, gardening, collecting veld-fruits and honey and on hunting. All of these required the availability of an agricultural work force which was covered, as has been said, both by people living in the area or by women and children who had been deported during raids.¹⁶⁹ While the introduction of crop cultivation to Kaoko in the 19th century has generally been associated with missionary or settler presence,¹⁷⁰ oral information is more ambiguous and refers

¹⁶⁶ Lau (1987); Siiskonen (1990) and Bollig (1997) implicitly reproduce this male paradigm.

¹⁶⁷ Henrichsen (1997) and McKittrick (2002) are much more sensitive to gender issues.

¹⁶⁸ McKittrick (2002), pp. 59–61.

¹⁶⁹ Oral information from Sesfontein available to me rarely refers to forced removal, see interview with Tobias Kaisuma, Warmquelle, 24.12.2001 and interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002.

¹⁷⁰ Sullivan (1998), pp. 31–34; Lau (1987), p. 52 follows the same argument for southern and central Namibia. Martin Legassick has referred to the “white historical mythology” crediting crop cultivation, i.e. irrigation to missionary presence, see: Legassick, M. (1996), *The Will of Abraham* and

to various sources including African ones. Family histories from Sesfontein unfold the development of dependent agricultural work by the period of Jan /Uixamab's leadership.¹⁷¹ Information about food production (such as vegetables) is vague, and the main aim of garden production apparently was the cultivation of tobacco.¹⁷² Both men and women did garden work and used the tobacco grown for barter in small-scale trade to acquire small stock and, in exceptional cases, even cattle.¹⁷³ Yet, the shifts affecting the gendered labour division felt most strongly were related to the reorganization of the livestock economy. The social organization of cattle accumulation and distribution of herds within the community were the domains in which the Oorlam leadership re-organized social relations and created and enforced patronage and loyalties.¹⁷⁴ While loans and inheritance of animals through kinship continued¹⁷⁵ and remained significant for women as a means of acquiring stock,¹⁷⁶ the raiding economy opened new forms of accessibility, particularly for young men serving in the commandos or fulfilling supervising duties.¹⁷⁷ Cattle herding, be it locally or on distant cattle posts, was another source for men,¹⁷⁸ as it was for women managing work and subsistence, i.e. supervising young herders and milk production.¹⁷⁹ The accumulation of stock through raids to cover increased subsistence needs was, as we saw, but one aim. Portions of herds left the region in exchange for guns, ammunition and horses. Guns as assets of male power and status have repeatedly figured in the historiography on 19th century Namibia.¹⁸⁰ The increased circulation of arms in Kaoko under Oorlam leadership probably affected men and women differently, although information is very slim. While arms became part and parcel of a militarized economy and increasingly signified social status of men,¹⁸¹ raids by armed commandos made individual and social security increasingly vulnerable.¹⁸² The

Elizabeth September: The Struggle for Land in Gordonias, 1898–1995. *Journal of African History*, 37: 371–418, here p. 371.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Fanuel //Hawaxab and Louda //Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001.

¹⁷² Interview with August Kasaona, Sesfontein, 20.1.2002.

¹⁷³ Interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002 and with M. Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002, for the area of Kaoko Otavi.

¹⁷⁴ See McKittrick (2002), p. 61 for Owambo; Lau (1987), p. 9 for southern and central Namibia.

¹⁷⁵ Ngendepi Muharukua in Bollig (1997), p. 137; Lau (1987), p. 49.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Maririro Koviti Tjihurura, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Fanuel //Hawaxab, Sesfontein, 28.12.2002, interview with August Kasaona, Sesfontein, 20.1.2002; McKittrick (2002), p. 61.

¹⁷⁸ McKittrick (2002), p. 70.

¹⁷⁹ Lau (1987), p. 69.

¹⁸⁰ McKittrick (2002); Henrichsen, D. & Krüger, G. (1998), 'We have been Captives Long Enough. We Want to be Free.' Land, Uniforms & Politics in the History of Herero in the Interwar Period. In Hayes et al, pp. 149–174.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001, interview with August Kasaona, Sesfontein, 20.1.2002; Ngendepi Muharukua in Bollig (1997), p. 145/46.

¹⁸² Interview with Louda //Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 17.12.2001, McKittrick (2002), p. 70.

context of the raid catapulted young men to the realm of mobility, force and economic advancement, while it might have confined women increasingly to those of dependent work, in subsistence or in social reproduction.¹⁸³

3.3. Ambivalences and alternatives in central Kaoko

Oorlam influence varied through space and showed signs of fractured liability the further it distanced its southern strongholds. Hence, it had to be negotiated locally:

Then the year of peace came. The Ovakuena [local term to refer to the Nama/Oorlam groups] came to Onambumbi to a homestead. The Ovaherero wanted to fight them. The Ovakuena informed them that they came to make peace. The group of Ovakuena consisted of men, women and children. But the issue of coming to make peace was just a lie. One day, when the youngest Ovaherero men went for hunting [raiding] the Ovakuena killed Karirinyununa, who was the headman or the head of the homestead. When the young ones came back they confronted the Ovakuena and asked why they had killed the headman. The Ovakuena answered that they killed him because they thought that Ovakuena and Ovaherero needed only one chief. The Ovaherero could not understand why they had to kill the headman they had found there, yet they pretended to understand. One man, a nephew of Karirinyununa, left the group of both Ovaherero and Ovakuena. He stayed in the bush for three days. When he came back he told the Ovaherero and Ovakuena that he had seen many head of cattle in the field but did not know to whom they belonged. So he informed them to move because he knew better grazing. The Ovakuena and Ovaherero moved and settled at the spring of Ondjuo.¹⁸⁴

The account quoted traces the genealogy of a particular community put under Oorlam leadership. The arrival of people who were perceived to be numerous and well-armed often involved conflict, yet could soon trigger processes of peace negotiation. The case mentioned here involved the arrival of entire Oorlam homesteads, including women, children and probably herds, whose migration might have been an expression of acquired autonomy as an independent group.¹⁸⁵ Resistance was an option, but depended on the relative strength of the local community, in terms of both people and arms.¹⁸⁶ Once peaceful strategies prevailed, the socio-economic and political transformation began and was most significant in

¹⁸³ Interview with Tobias Kaisuma, Warmquelle, 24.12.2001; Kozomgombe Tjingee in Bollig (1997), p. 95.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002 and with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.2.2002.

¹⁸⁵ Lau (1987), p. 20; Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1997), p. 208.

¹⁸⁶ Oral history available to me rarely refers to people being killed in the context of Oorlam settlement at particular places, e.g. interviews on people resisting and being killed, e.g. with Mathäus Karutjaiva, 27.12.2001. This might be a variable of space, as oral narratives from northern Kaoko abound of narratives of death, see Bollig (1997).

the recruitment of young men into raiding and hunting parties.¹⁸⁷ The question of political leadership proved to be a sensitive issue and the violent form it took in the case retold here might indicate the scale of contestation around questions of political legitimacy and loyalty.¹⁸⁸ Yet, while the loss of political office and political patronage might have been issues addressed immediately, knowledge and appropriation of local resources, i.e. cattle, water and pasture, remained an advantage to members of the local communities, and hence forced the Oorlam newcomers into some sort of cooperation. The migration of the new community, animated by the prospects of cattle, better pastures and water, remains ambiguous. It might be framed within the mobility of cattle rearing and the seasonal use of pastures and water, and hence signify the emergence of a new community in a situation of social stability and peace. Likewise, the migration to Ondjuo might have been but one stage in a process of gradual territorial expansion and social integration. There were alternatives to the integration into the Oorlam society, and mobility, as well as economic differentiation, turned out to be among the most important ones.¹⁸⁹ The peculiarities of Kaoko's topography in its remote mountains and desert areas, along with Oorlam expansion being linked to the needs of cattle rearing and the trajectories of trade, preserved spaces of refuge within the region, although often involving significant impoverishment. A strong narrative of single or affiliated communities withdrawing into these remote spaces has emerged within oral accounts particularly from central and northern Kaoko. The spatial marginalization went hand in hand with the loss of herds of small and large stock.¹⁹⁰ To cover their basic subsistence needs, people were forced to rely on hunting and particularly on collecting veldt fruits¹⁹¹ and occasionally on cattle theft, which was dangerous and hampered by the tight supervision of herds.¹⁹² Additionally, upholding small-scale trade seems to have been a further option, and the role of women in this context was crucial. The western Owambo communities were the main trade partners with whom to barter food and small stock for subsistence consumption. In central Kaoko, for instance, women operating as single traders or organized in small

¹⁸⁷ Kozongombe Tjingee in Bollig (1997), p. 81.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Emily Kazombaru Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 10.5.2002 on a similar case.

¹⁸⁹ McKittrick too identifies mobility as a consequence and response to raids in Owambo, McKittrick (2002), p. 74. See also Hayes (1992), p. 98.

¹⁹⁰ As it was the case in central Namibia in the 1860s, see Henrichsen (1997), p. 146.

¹⁹¹ Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002 and with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 7.5.2002; Vitunda Mutambo and Kandjuhu Rutjindo, in Bollig (1997), p. 262.

¹⁹² Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002 and with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 7.5.2002; Henrichsen (1997), p. 174; McKittrick (2002), p. 70.

trading parties regularly travelled to Ongandjera and Ombalantu to exchange their garden products for goats and sheep.¹⁹³

3.3.1. Kakurukouje of Ombepera and the consolidation of political rule

The outstanding oral narrative on the negotiation of Oorlam rule in Kaoko developed around the person of Kakurukouje of Ombepera in northern Kaoko. The case of Kakurukouje is an example of the consolidation of political leadership in the context of Oorlam rule in the second half of the 19th century.¹⁹⁴ The genesis of his leadership was linked to a set of social, political and economic alliances. Therein, Kakurukouje's residence in the north-western part of Kaoko and therefore his closeness to the northern border area and to the western Owambo communities of Uukwaluuthi and Ongandjera might have proved more than favourable. While he partly subordinated himself to Oorlam rule and is said to have been involved in herding cattle owned by Jan /Uixamab,¹⁹⁵ the character and day-to-day articulation of the political patronage remains ambiguous. The same applies to Kakurukouje's active involvement in the raiding economy, which substantially increased his wealth in cattle.¹⁹⁶ On the one hand, this involved the necessity to pay tribute and to supply the Oorlam leadership with information on herds, with herders, guides and menial work.¹⁹⁷ On the other hand, the social institution of the commando enabled him likewise to mobilize young men and to create loyalties through cattle loans and compensations. Beyond the accumulation of stock, his alliance in the Oorlam raiding economy placed Kakurukouje among the first men in the northern area to own a gun¹⁹⁸ and hence enabled him to access new objects and means of power. The raiding economy furthermore linked him to the flows of commercial trade spreading through the area by the 1880s. Oral accounts and the few written references suggest Kakurukouje figured as a skilful intermediary who strategically utilized his geographic position among various agents of trade.¹⁹⁹ His economic alliances regularly

¹⁹³ Interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002.

¹⁹⁴ Henrichsen has elaborated the case of Kamaharero and the Ohorongo clan in central Namibia, Henrichsen (1997), p. 323ff.

¹⁹⁵ NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 vol 1, Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, 15.9.1900.

¹⁹⁶ Bollig (1997), p. 16; McKittrick has referred to the concentration of herds with wealthy, influential people due to raiding in Ovambo, see McKittrick (2002), p. 70.

¹⁹⁷ NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 vol 1, Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia, 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, 15.9.1900.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Ngakurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002 and with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002; NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 vol 1, Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia, 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, 15.9.1900.

spread beyond Oorlam control and included, for example, contacts to Portuguese and Boer hunters and traders, who increasingly targeted his area and had to negotiate the terms of their business.²⁰⁰ Georg Hartmann considered Kakurukouje the main local figure involved in what he termed the Portuguese intrusion to Kaoko in the late 19th century.²⁰¹ Beyond supplying these hunters with guides and carriers recruited from around the region, Ombepera was said to have been one of the northern bases of the Portuguese businessmen, from where they got land for corn and oat cultivation to be used as forage for the horses.²⁰²

Kakurukouje's main challenge probably lay in increasing his following in a situation of social and economic insecurity in Kaoko. Social alliance through marriage, which linked him and his entourage to southern Angola, to Sesfontein and to eastern Owambo, was one strategy,²⁰³ which guaranteed access to women and children as a workforce and benefited the continuity of stock accumulation through inheritance.²⁰⁴ Yet, it was precisely the context of conflict, which enabled Kakurukouje to enforce his claim to status and power on a daily basis. Oral information justifies his renown with his judicial function of resolving disputes around residence, resource management and inheritance²⁰⁵ and with his knowledge of preventive witchcraft applied in the protection of herds against disease, theft and drought.²⁰⁶

3.4. Migration and flight

Hitherto the focus has been on the articulation of Oorlam rule inside Kaoko and on the effects of the region's integration into the long-distance trade. Although the expansion of the raiding economy strengthened the Oorlam elite, their entourage and their political allies, it also led to an overexploitation of resources, most of all cattle and game, and hence to widespread impoverishment.²⁰⁷ Mobility of people and herds both within and beyond the region became, as we shall see, a crucial strategy to counteract this.²⁰⁸ Those areas, which most predominantly experienced Oorlam presence in the form of raids, such as the northern part

²⁰⁰ Later, the German colonial government would try to use these networks of Kakurukouje to control Portuguese hunting in Kaoko. See NAN A 560, diary of Viktor Franke, unpublished transcription, Vol. 2, January 1901 to August 1902, p. 176.

²⁰¹ NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 vol 1, Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia, 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, 15.9.1900.

²⁰² NAN ZBU 2037 W II K 1 vol 1, Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia, 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, 15.9.1900.

²⁰³ Interview with M. Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001.

²⁰⁴ Henrichsen (1997), p. 328.

²⁰⁵ Interview with August Kasaona, Sesfontein, 20.1.2002 and Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001.

²⁰⁶ Tjambiru Tjikumbamba in Bollig (1997), p. 132. Henrichsen hints at a similar role of Kamaharero in central Namibia, Henrichsen (1997), pp. 346 & 365.

²⁰⁷ Böhm (1878), although his general missionary propaganda paradigm is particularly strong here.

²⁰⁸ McKittrick (2002), p. 74.

of Kaoko and to a lesser extent the south-western margin of Angola, saw an exodus of vast sections of the local population.²⁰⁹ Oral information on the displacement of people as a response to raiding illustrates the disruptive impact the violent incursions had:

'So, Muje the war is near, the war is near. Let us separate, they will kill us, we will be destroyed.' After they said that, immediately afterwards Ndjoue was killed, and they separated there. The one of Mbumba of the small kudu passed through the mountain pass of Otjikotoona. He drove the cow of Ngao of Kasona, of the mother of Kuziruka, and they went down the valley, they crossed the river (Kunene) at Ohamurenge. They crossed there, the very good one, and went up and passed the Blunt Axe that ate the cow of the wife of Kondimba which passed the gorge of Otjijoreravaenda. The Ovakuena came down to Otjinduu, they raided the cow of Tjao which had a chest, they raided the Ouoruze area. Then it (the war?) crossed there straight towards the sun. The raiding party that came separated into smaller groups on the way [...]. Those of Kaukumuha went and crossed the Kunene river. Then another one came [...]. It was them who followed the home of Muje and burnt the people. It was there that they separated.²¹⁰

The narration of flight quoted is a vivid example of how oral histories construct genealogies through people and cattle anchored in specific geographical landscapes, and hence link the present to the past.²¹¹ The fate of Muje and his followers indicates how physical dislocation meant social disruption when communities separated in response to violence, death and insecurity.²¹² Families and groups who had broken up dispersed in different directions, at times coming to a stop temporarily only to continue as soon as new raiders approached.²¹³ If possible, they would take their belongings and herds with them.²¹⁴ Yet, most oral accounts outline situations of flight, which forced people to leave behind those few animals which had been saved from previous raids.²¹⁵ Destinations for the migrants and refugees depended on various factors. First, particularly if they owned herds, the trajectories had to follow water-resources and pastures, which continued to expose them to threats of new assaults. Furthermore, residence and social networks determined flights, as people hoped to find shelter with kin in the neighbourhood or living further away. Concentrating people and cattle temporarily was indeed a preventive measure which made communities stronger and

²⁰⁹ Stahls (1991), p. 80 & 155; Clarence-Smith (1979), pp. 50 & 76; Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1997), p. 224–225.

²¹⁰ Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1997), p. 207–208.

²¹¹ Henrichsen (1997). Introduction.

²¹² McKittrick (2002), p. 74.

²¹³ Interviews with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002 and with Ngakurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002.

²¹⁴ Ngendepi Muharukua in Bollig (1997), p. 148.

²¹⁵ E.g. interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.2.2002.

hence less attractive to raiders.²¹⁶ Such considerations and additional specific conditions gave rise to a complex pattern of mobility through time and space, leading people from Kaoko southwards as far as Omaruru and the Waterberg area,²¹⁷ or eastwards to Owambo.²¹⁸ Yet, the main flow of migrants left the region northwards, moving away from the political centres in the south, and eventually crossing the northern Kunene River into southern Angola.²¹⁹

3.4.1. Strategies of socio-economic reconstruction in southern Angola

Migration into Angola was seemingly determined by kinship relationships linking the refugees to local residents,²²⁰ and the control of crossing points at the river by particular families might have shaped the social pattern of migration.²²¹ The immigrants spread to various places, but settlement was limited to the south-western region. Although conditions remained difficult and raids had reached the region north of the Kunene River, the period in Angola is generally remembered as one of recovery.²²² Economic differentiation, participation in commercial trade and recruitment into colonial military structures were the main pillars of this process. The loss of stock and the ongoing hazards of cattle rearing forced people to broaden their agricultural subsistence economy. Crop cultivation, and especially the growing of tobacco, which could be used in local trade, became an additional source of income.²²³ Women in particular used these African trade networks to buy food, clothes and cattle.²²⁴ Yet, above all, it was commercial trade that offered additional income to support the gradual repastoralisation. The spread of commercial hunting in the area and the development of transport businesses by Boer and Portuguese traders in the 1880s included young men who found jobs as guides, horse herders, carriers and hunters.²²⁵ James Chapman, who moved to the area in the 1880s, is said to have relied on a small group of hunter-traders,²²⁶ which probably involved African men. Dependent work for traders was used to buy cattle from settlers, but it also enabled people to access imported products such as horses, guns and

²¹⁶ Ngendepi Muharukua in Bollig (1997), pp. 149–56.

²¹⁷ Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1997), p. 41; interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002.

²¹⁸ Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 7.5.2002.

²¹⁹ Bollig (1997). Introduction.

²²⁰ Bollig (1997), p. 17.

²²¹ Kozongombe Tjingee in Bollig (1997), p. 108.

²²² Bollig (1997).

²²³ Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1997), p. 214; Clarence Smith (1979), p. 61.

²²⁴ Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002; Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1997), pp. 212–213, although Muniombara doesn't specify gender.

²²⁵ Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1997), p. 213; interview with David Humu, Kaoko Otavi, 12.1.2002.

²²⁶ Clarence Smith (1979), p. 51.

alcohol.²²⁷ Cotton plantations, developing as one sector of the colonial economy along the coast, offered further options for seasonal work from the 1860s onwards.²²⁸ Unfortunately, neither the historiography nor the oral information available explores the gendered division of agricultural labour, and hence it remains unclear if women sought work in the colonial agricultural sector. Beyond trade and agriculture, the strategy specific for men during the period in southern Angola was to engage in mercenary services in the Portuguese colonial armies against resisting African societies such as Nkhumbi and Kwanyama in the 1880s and early 1890s.²²⁹ The military campaigns by the Portuguese government were the repressive response to increased African resistance in the area. These were aimed at subordinating the local population and subjecting them to taxation, using them for labour and controlling the circulation of arms.²³⁰ African involvement as mercenaries was mainly driven by economic considerations, as the service was paid with loot stock.²³¹ Military campaigns went hand in hand with extensive raids, and the violent appropriation of cattle became a form of income increasingly pursued by the emerging African male elite.²³² Indeed, men such as Vita Tom and Muhona Katiti, who would later play an important role in Kaoko, drew much of their economic wealth and social status from their involvement in the Portuguese military and police forces.²³³ Male status in general came to be increasingly linked to the raiding economy and to arms as a means of power and violence.²³⁴

3.4.1.1. An emerging elite - Vita Tom and the constitution of gendered power

Vita Tom, known in the region as Harunga and referred to in the written sources and popular literature as Oorlog, is one of the most prominent individuals known in the history of Kaoko,²³⁵ not least because his wealth, status and power was closely linked to the emergence of a colonial economy in north-western Namibia and southern Angola in the late 19th century. Vita Tom was born in Otjimbingwe in 1863. His father, Tom Bechuana, had been involved in commercial hunting since the 1850s and worked with both Anderson and Eriks-

²²⁷ Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002; Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1997), p. 232.

²²⁸ Clarence Smith (1979), p. 26; Bollig (1997), p. 17.

²²⁹ Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 27, Bollig (1997), p. 17; interview with David Humu, Kaoko Otavi, 12.1.2002 and interview with Ngakurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002.

²³⁰ Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 15.

²³¹ Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1997), pp. 54–55.

²³² Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 85.

²³³ Bollig (1997), p. 18; Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 85.

²³⁴ Interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002.

²³⁵ See e.g. Green, L. (1952), *Lords of the Last Frontier. The Story of South West Africa and its people of all races*. Cape Town; Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999); we'll discuss some of the reasons why Tom has attained such popularity in historiography later on.

son in central and northern Namibia. Vita's mother Kaitundu was a sister of Manasse Tjise-seta, who would later become headman of Omaruru, thus linking Tom to the Herero elite in the central area. Tom Bechuana and his son left the region in the 1860s due to the conflicts that had broken out between the Nama/Oorlam and the Herero leadership, and reached Angola in the 1870s. It is here that Vita Tom began to establish himself as a key figure within the militarized raiding economy. The period he spent in southern Angola illustrates the momentous socio-economic role mercenary service and commercial hunting had for an emerging male elite. According to oral information, Tom's successful advancement in southern Angola was due to his closeness to the colonial economy and administration, bolstered not least by his multilingualism.²³⁶ Furthermore, his matrilineal connections and a strategic policy of intermarriage nurtured acceptance and status within the local communities.²³⁷ Tom's economic success resulted from his role as an intermediary, linking African, Boer and European activities, for example, in the realm of commercial hunting and the transport business.²³⁸ Yet, his main source of wealth and social advancement was his involvement in the Portuguese colonial army and in the raiding economy, which gave him access to arms, horses and cattle. Tom's advancement within the military hierarchy contributed to an environment in which men could produce and reinforce their claim to economic and social power through the accumulation and distribution of raided cattle:

[...] The Portuguese regarded him as a general. And when we were on our way to Kwanyama, we came to a certain place called Otjizemba where the troops gathered. The Hereros were sent to go and fetch cattle from the Owambos, which were to be slaughtered and eaten by the troops. [...] It was decided that all Owambos must be killed, so they were killed. And while we were eating the cattle at Otjizemba, it was noted that Vita was originally from Omaruru. [...] After the cattle raid, we were given money as presents, as well as some of the cattle. From these cattle, the cattle of the leaders were chosen, and for those on their side. No cattle were given to the people of our side, manure was thrown in our faces three times. [...] ²³⁹

The accumulation of herds helped Tom to increase his own wealth and through this to maintain a following through a system of loans and patronage.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, arms, horses, wagons as well as uniforms became the insignia of his status and reputation linking him

²³⁶ Manasse Veseveta on his Youth and Vita Harunga. Narrated to a Kaputu near Omaruru, 30.3.1986, MSORP tape 49, in Haywood, A. Lau, B. & Ohly, R. (1992), *Warriors, Leaders, Sages and Outcasts in the Namibian Past. Narratives collected from Herero Sources for the Michael Scott Oral records Project (MSORP) 1985–86*. Windhoek, p. 205–206; Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p. 20.

²³⁷ Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p. 20.

²³⁸ Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1997), p. 55, refers to a Portuguese trader, who used to visit Harunga's homestead.

²³⁹ Manasse Veseveta to A. Kaputu, Omaruru, 30.3.1986, in Haywood et al (1992), p. 185–186.

²⁴⁰ Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p.23.

to a genealogy of powerful Herero men associated with Omaruru as a socio-political centre in the 1870s.²⁴¹ Cattle, horses and wagons were additional assets, which enabled him to enforce his commercial interests and access the Mossamedes market acquiring goods such as cloth, blankets and alcohol.²⁴² Yet, the disruptiveness of this system of social advancement based on the exploitation of resources and the application of military force could only exist in a repressive colonial context and, by the 1890s, when the Portuguese military abandoned expeditions into the interior, the power and rule of men such as Tom began to show the first signs of decay.²⁴³

4. Rinderpest

4.1. The Rinderpest and the collapse of Oorlam hegemony

The rinderpest of 1896/97 has received some attention in the historiography of southern Africa, and of Namibia in particular. Originating in the Horn of Africa in the late 1880s, the disease gradually spread southwards along the east coast and through the central regions reaching the Zambesi River in the early 1890s. Once it overcame this natural barrier, rinderpest relentlessly made its way through the entire subcontinent.²⁴⁴ Generally speaking, the epidemic and its aftermath are considered to have had a devastating impact on the socio-economy of the entire region. Estimates concerning losses in cattle vary between 70 and 90 percent with regard to African-owned livestock with significantly lower rates for European-owned cattle. In the short run, the disease caused widespread impoverishment among vast sections of the African pastoral communities,²⁴⁵ thus endorsing their integration into the capitalised colonial economies as cheap industrial and agricultural workforce in the long run. If anyone could be said to have benefited in the aftermath of the rinderpest, it would be the colonial state, the mining industry and the farming sector thereafter dominated by the settler society.²⁴⁶ Although the German colonial government had tried to prevent the spread of rinderpest into its own territory by closing the border to cattle and animal products imported from British Bechuanaland or the Transvaal, the first cases of

²⁴¹ Henrichsen (1997), p. 367.

²⁴² Katjira Muniombara, pp. 209–210, and Tjambiru Tjikumbamba, p. 127 in Bollig (1997) narrate how raided cattle was driven to Mossamedes to be exchanged for imported goods. Möller (1974), p. 32.

²⁴³ Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 87.

²⁴⁴ Most authors draw these general trajectories of rinderpest between 1889 and 1896 from Van Onselen, C. (1972), Reactions to Rinderpest. *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 13, No. 3: 473–488.

²⁴⁵ Gewald (1999), pp. 100–117. For a critical discussion of Gewald's interpretation see Miescher (2009), pp. 56–57.

²⁴⁶ Van Onselen (1972); Bley (1968), pp. 164–66.

infected animals were reported in Windhoek and in the north-east around Grootfontein in 1897.²⁴⁷ The administration concentrated their efforts on preventing the further advancement of rinderpest into the colony with the establishment of a policed border zone in the northern and north-eastern areas. These lay beyond the government's control and were considered to be the regions from which the disease would gradually encroach. But against all precautions, rinderpest eventually struck the territory in full. Central and eastern Namibia were most affected, particularly those herds in the vicinity of the main trade and transport routes.²⁴⁸ In the south, where geographical conditions limited the density of stock and imposed an extensive system of far-flung cattle posts, the disease's impact was much less. The colonial government reacted in various ways: enforced quarantines, isolation of herds and the killing of infected animals provided little relief. The authorities therefore initiated a far-reaching inoculation campaign based on Koch's methods.²⁴⁹ The results of the inoculation campaigns varied; they were favourable particularly for cattle owned by the settlers and African elites associated with the colonial government. Most African cattle owners in central Namibia could not benefit from inoculation, either because they were too distant from the colonial centres or because they experienced the treatment as a forced imposition and potential measure of economic control.²⁵⁰ In general terms, rinderpest dramatically changed the socio-economic landscape of those parts of the colony that had come under colonial influence. The consequent collapse of the transport system based on ox-wagons, the explosion of prices for stock and trade goods, as well as the weakening of African political systems due to the economic crisis, eventually led to the strengthening of the colonial administration and to the establishment of the settlers as the dominant agricultural entrepreneurs.²⁵¹

In the northern areas of Owambo, beyond the immediate colonial sphere of control, the situation developed differently. Hayes²⁵² and Miescher²⁵³ have pointed out the significance of variations in rinderpest's socio-economic impact as a variable of the degree of colonial and mercantile penetration and the farmers' involvement with the colonial state and society. The disease appears to have spread towards northern Namibia from the south and was first encountered in the northern region in Ondonga and Uukwambi.²⁵⁴ It soon spread throughout the entire region and into southern Angola. Here too, rinderpest's impact was

²⁴⁷ Miescher (2009), pp. 44–45.

²⁴⁸ Miescher (2009), p. 61ff.

²⁴⁹ On the Koch method, which was based on the use of gall from infected animals, see Miescher (2009), p. 53.

²⁵⁰ Miescher (2009), p. 57.

²⁵¹ Bley (1968), p. 166.

²⁵² Hayes (1992).

²⁵³ Miescher (2009), pp. 58–60.

²⁵⁴ Hayes (1992), p. 102; Siiskonen (1990), p. 163.

disastrous,²⁵⁵ although there is a dearth of information specifying relative and absolute losses of cattle. Inoculation did take place in some instances, as missionaries began to inoculate herds within their areas of influence.²⁵⁶ Access to treatment followed the social hierarchies, and Christian communities as well as kings and their entourages who were on friendly terms with the missions or with traders entering Ovambo managed to save parts of their herds.²⁵⁷ Axel Eriksson, who lost some of his own cattle in central Namibia, writes of how he inoculated African-owned herds while on a trip through the north and to southern Angola:

At the beginning of this month I rode from Aukas to Ondonga to buy provisions for my servants and myself. I then soon found that the plague had raged in the most terrible way among the cattle of the Ovambo tribes. There were dead animals lying everywhere. Despite that there was also a famine in Ovamboland, the Finnish missionaries there were merciful enough to lend and sell me twenty sacks of grain and beans for a wagon to transport the provisions. I offered the chief in Ondonga (Kambonde) my help to inoculate a part of his cattle, but he declined this offer. Almost all of his herds were later lost.// From Ondonga I rode to Uukwanyama (in southern Angola), where I succeeded in saving several thousand head of cattle for the natives through serum injection²⁵⁸

As is the case for central Namibia, not much is known about African responses to rinderpest in the northern territories. In the short run, the disease devastated the local economy and led to widespread impoverishment.²⁵⁹ In the long run, it reinforced economic and social differences between rich and poor and between men and women.²⁶⁰ Major shifts in the distribution of cattle took place. The loss of herds put political elites under increased pressure as they needed to access new sources of stock to enforce their political and commercial interests.²⁶¹ Kwanyama raiding parties, for instance, were drawn increasingly into decentralised communities, which had been weakened by the disease.²⁶² Boer and European traders and hunters used their privileged access to inoculation and their involvement with

²⁵⁵ See e.g. McKittrick, M. (1998), *Generational Struggle and Social Mobility in Western Ovambo Communities, 1915–1954*. In Hayes et al, pp. 241–262, here p. 246; Hartmann, W. (1998a), 'Ondillimani! Iipumbu ya Tshilongo & the Ambiguities of Resistance in Ovambo'. In Hayes et al, pp. 263–288, here p. 283; Hayes (1992), p. 101; Kreike, E. (1992), *Re-Creating Eden. Land Use, Environment, and Society in Southern Angola and Northern Namibia*. Portsmouth, p. 35.

²⁵⁶ Hayes (1992), p. 102.

²⁵⁷ Kreike (2004), p. 39.

²⁵⁸ Rudner (2006), p. 215. Eriksson's report refers to July 1897. James Chapman too reported on inoculations he did in southern Angola in the same year. See NAN A. 233, Chapman, "Account of Entry of the Trek Boers into Angola." (unpublished manuscript), p. 47.

²⁵⁹ Hayes (1992), p. 104; Kreike (2004), p. 37.

²⁶⁰ Hayes (1992), p. 104.

²⁶¹ Kreike (2004), p. 40.

²⁶² Hayes (1992), p. 110.

the colonial authorities to accumulate stock. However, a general assessment of the impact of rinderpest in northern Namibia remains difficult. While the disease intensified processes of socio-economic transformation and did draw Owambo closer into the colonial and commercial spheres,²⁶³ the effects of rinderpest remained weaker here than in central Namibia. One reason might have been the greater stability of political structures, at least in the centralised Owambo communities such as Kwanjama and Ondonga.²⁶⁴ Economic differentiation, i.e. the favourable geographic conditions for crop cultivation particularly in the central floodplains, was another factor. Indeed, the collapse of the stock economy and intensified raids forced many communities to reorganize their subsistence activities socially and spatially. Stock herding became more extensive, in order to protect herds from raids and from diseases, and increasingly an exclusive male activity, while crop cultivation to cover subsistence needs fell into the realm of female production.²⁶⁵

4.1.1. The socio-political impact of rinderpest in Kaoko

As with Owambo, the reconstruction of the history of rinderpest in Kaoko and the disease's socio-economic impact is challenging. While rinderpest is occasionally referred to in oral accounts on southern Angola,²⁶⁶ it is less an issue in corresponding narratives from central and southern Kaoko.²⁶⁷ Information from written archival material is no less rudimentary. This is largely because in 1897, when rinderpest broke out in the territory, colonial presence in the north-west was still almost non-existent. In contrast to Owambo, where missionaries had been among the main agents in documenting and to some extent medicating the disease, missionary societies were not yet working in Kaoko. Similarly, the measures taken by the German colonial government against the spread of rinderpest, such as closing borders and policing animal movements, or instigating state-organized inoculation campaigns, had not included the north-western area.²⁶⁸ Nevertheless, European, Boer and African commer-

²⁶³ Hayes (1992), p. 111.

²⁶⁴ Miescher (2009), p. 59, based on Hayes.

²⁶⁵ Kreike (2004), p. 41.

²⁶⁶ See the narration of Katjira Muniombara in Bollig (1998a), p. 182. W. Chapman's estimation of losses close to 90% among African-owned cattle in southern Angola is often referred to in the literature, such as in Kreike (2004), p. 37 or in Bollig (1998a), pp. 181–182. An archival reference to the gravity of losses in southern Angola is found in NAN ZBU 2030 Nama des Kaokofeldes (Topnaars von Zesfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893), Bericht des kaiserlichen Konsul Gleim an den Reichskanzler in Berlin, 10.3.1901.

²⁶⁷ One reason for this is, as we shall see, the differences in rinderpest's impact throughout the region and hence the varying attention it has received within oral narrations of the past.

²⁶⁸ There was one exception, i.e. 2685 head of cattle were inoculated in Fransfontein. Unfortunately it is not clear how many of them were owned by the Rhenish mission society in Fransfontein and its African Christians. See: NAN ZBU A VI a 3 Band 3, Jahresberichte über die Entwicklung des Schutzgebietes, Jahresbericht, 3.8.1898.

cial hunters had established their entrepreneurial activities in the region, and their mobility and involvement in transregional networks might have facilitated the circulation and accessibility of vaccine in Kaoko, at least partially. But what eventually determined the rinderpest experience in the region and the local response to the disease was again the peculiarity of its geographical conditions on the one hand and Kaoko's particular location and involvement in long-distance trade on the other.

These factors have a bearing on the following attempt to outline the impact that the rinderpest made on the region's socio-political and economic environment. Conceptually therefore, we need to consider the situation in Kaoko on the eve of the rinderpest's advancement into the area and compare it to the dramatically changed conditions evident after the disease receded. While rinderpest no doubt deeply transformed the political landscape of Kaoko and laid the ground for colonial and missionary expansion into the region, its socio-economic impact on the local African societies was diverse. To account for these variations we shall have to differentiate the rinderpest's impact on commercial transregional economies in contrast to the significance of cattle losses for subsistence production.²⁶⁹

As we saw, colonial response to rinderpest crystallised in the demarcation of a border zone towards the northern territories, the so-called *Absperrlinie*.²⁷⁰ In the north-west, the border ran along the southern margin of the Etosha pan, through Okaukuejo and continued towards Kauas Okawa up to Tsawisis in the vicinity of the coast.²⁷¹ It positioned Fransfontein to the south, i.e. inside the Police Zone, while Sesfontein and most of Kaoko came to lie beyond the border zone. In view of their structural weakness in this area, the colonial authorities tried to involve local communities in the implementation and, most notably, in the policing of the *Absperrlinie*. They asked Jan Uixamab in Sesfontein and David Swartbooi in Fransfontein to clear the areas north and south of the border and to move people and animals as necessary, but their request went unanswered.²⁷² The colonial government was bound to accept such an unambiguous disregard and there was no way to enforce collaboration on Kaoko's Oorlam leadership, which still maintained its hegemonic powers in the area, especially in Sesfontein. On the eve of the rinderpest's outbreak, the settlement was still the most important centre in the region. Its Oorlam population was estimated to have come close to 500, which must also have included a substantial number of de-

²⁶⁹ This conceptual difference is implicitly suggested by Hayes, 1992, and more explicitly by Kreike (2004).

²⁷⁰ Miescher (2009), p. 44.

²⁷¹ NAN ZBU A VI a 3, Band 2, Jahresbericht 1896/97, Jahrebericht, 28.6.1897.

²⁷² Riechmann, H. (1899), *Unter den Zwartboois auf Franzfontein. Ein Beitrag zur Missions- und Kolonialgeschichte Südwestafrikas*. Barmen, p. 44 and (1897) *Über die Absperrungsmassnahmen im Norden des Schutzgebietes. Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, p. 325.

pendent people at the settlement or in its immediate vicinity. The same applied to e.g. Warmquelle and Otjitambi, significant water places in southern Kaoko, whose population had increased throughout the 1880s and 1890s.²⁷³ Demographic concentration at these locations corresponded to the economic prosperity. Substantial herds of small and large stock increasingly stood out by contrast with the regressions experienced in the central areas of the territory and both Sesfontein and Fransfontein showed thriving gardening economies.²⁷⁴

This situation changed dramatically when the rinderpest reached the north-western areas. While we do not know where and when the first cases of the disease were recorded, the continuing commercial traffic through Kaoko, both of people and stock, and the high density of game no doubt favoured the epidemic's advance. Whatever route or form the rinderpest took, cattle herds were substantially depleted by the end of the 19th century and, correspondingly, human population dropped below 100 both in Fransfontein and in Sesfontein.²⁷⁵ Two factors accelerated this process of socio-economic deterioration: first, a period of drought between 1898 and 1900²⁷⁶ and, second, as we shall see, the growing colonial penetration into the area from the south.

4.1.1.1. Shifting parameters of trade

As we have noted, it is difficult to get a sense of the rinderpest's varied impact in Kaoko as there is but scant information available regarding the losses. Kreike has used price fluctuations as indications for the extent of rinderpest-induced devastation in Owambo, where the amount paid for one head of cattle doubled between 1882 and 1896.²⁷⁷ Similar shifts can be traced for southern Angola and northern Kaoko, where the price for stock increased to 60

²⁷³ RMG 2.499 a C/h 8 a, Franzfontein, Band 1, 1899–1906, Riechmann, 12.4.1899; ELCRN VI und VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.39, Riechmann, 22.4.1897.

²⁷⁴ NAN ZBU 147 A 3, Band 2, Jahresbericht 1896/97, Jahresbericht, 28.6.1897; NAN ZBU 2030 Nama des Kaokofeldes (Topnaars von Zesfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893), Protokoll einer Erklärung von Salomon Richter (Zwartbooi-Hottentott), vor dem gefreiten Protokollführer Hausmann, Outjo, 21.6.1898.

²⁷⁵ NAN ZBU 148 A VI a 3, Band 5, Jahresberichte 1899/1900, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Nordbezirks in der Zeit vom 1.7.99–30.6.1900, 15.6.1900; NAN ZBU 149 A VI a 3, Band 7, Jahresberichte 1901/1902, Anlage VI. Jahresbericht des Distrikts Zesfontein für die Zeit vom 1.4.1901 bis 31.3.1902, 16.6.1902; ELCRN VI und VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.40, Riechmann, März, 1901; ELCRN VII 27.1. Alte Akten aus Franzfonteiner Gemeinde, 1895–1904, Riechmann, n.d. (ca. 1899).

²⁷⁶ NAN ZBU 149 A VI a 3, Band 7, Jahresberichte 1901/1902, Anlage VI: Jahresbericht des Distrikts Zesfontein für die Zeit vom 1.4.1901 bis 31.3.1902, 16.6.1902. Drought apparently affected Owambo in the same period too, see Kreike (2004), p. 36.

²⁷⁷ Kreike (2004), p. 37. The price for one head of cattle rose to 70 Milreis.

Milreis (200 Reichsmark) immediately after the rinderpest.²⁷⁸ The depletion of cattle most directly affected trade, particularly in a situation where stock had become the main currency with which to access imported goods. The accumulation of stock and the protection of herds became increasingly difficult and more than ever necessitated the continuous access to and supply of arms. Oorlam leadership in Sesfontein increasingly experienced pressure from neighbouring rivals, and raids from Owambo into southern Kaoko were among the most immediate.²⁷⁹ But the increase in violence was general. Sesfontein became the main source of arms trade in this period²⁸⁰ and local commandos were forced to intensify the supervision of herds and to extend their raiding activities into ever expanding territories.²⁸¹ Other rival groups became involved and the Oorlam raiding economy soon began to face effective resistance from Portuguese and Boer settlers in southern Angola, who extended their own enterprises into northern and central Kaoko.²⁸² This situation of heightened rivalry unfolding within the region exposed local communities to increasing pressure on their economic and ecological livelihoods. It also reframed options of socio-political alliance, especially for young men. Sesfontein did preserve its residential attraction; the Otjitambi community, for example, moved to Sesfontein in 1897.²⁸³ Others preferred to dissociate themselves and to become armed recruits of European and Boer hunters and traders.²⁸⁴

The dissolution and reconfiguration of socio-economic relations justified important demographic shifts.²⁸⁵ Beyond this, these migrations might have been motivated as much by the need to reorganize a subsistence economy, which was based on stock rearing and had to face threats posed by rinderpest. Inoculation might have been accessible within commercial networks but if European or Boer traders and hunters did introduce some medication into Kaoko, its accessibility most probably remained limited both geographically and socially.²⁸⁶ The most sensitive measure to protect subsistence cattle from rinderpest was to

²⁷⁸ ZBU 2030 Nama des Kaokofeldes (Topnaars von Zesfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893), Bericht des kaiserlichen Konsul Gleim an den Reichskanzler in Berlin, 10.3.1901.

²⁷⁹ RMG 2.499 a C/h 8 a, Franzfontein, Band 1, 1899–1906, Riechmann, 11.7.1900.

²⁸⁰ NAN ZBU 147 A VI a 3, Band 2, Jahresbericht 1896/97, Jahresbericht, 28.6.1897.

²⁸¹ Hayes (1992), pp. 110–111.

²⁸² Hayes (1992), p. 110; NAN ZBU 2037 W II vol 1 – Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia, 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, Sanitatas, nördliches Kaokofeld, 15.9.1900.

²⁸³ NAN ZBU 147 A VI a 3, Band 2, Jahresbericht 1896/97, Jahresbericht, 28.6.1897; NAN ZBU 2037 W II vol 1 – Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia, 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, Sanitatas, nördliches Kaokofeld, 15.9.1900.

²⁸⁴ NAN ZBU 2037 W II vol 1 – Angelegenheiten des Ovambolandes generalia, 1898–1907, Geheimbericht von Georg Hartmann, Sanitatas, nördliches Kaokofeld, 15.9.1900.

²⁸⁵ Kreike (2004) makes a similar point for Owambo, p. 35.

²⁸⁶ There is no archival evidence for inoculation in Kaoko, but as Boer and European traders and hunters did inoculate African-owned cattle in Owambo and southern Angola, there might have been similar instances in Kaoko.

isolate herds at remote cattle posts or in those areas that lay beyond the primary trajectories of trade. Kaoko's specific geographic conditions, its numerous gorges, mountainous areas and widely dispersed water places and pastures required extensive cattle husbandry. In a situation of threatening disease, this geographic configuration and an adjusted pattern of spatial organization allowed for the protection of stock, particularly for those who were not involved in the commercial cattle economy.²⁸⁷ Yet, the strongest shift within the subsistence economy in the region suggested by the information available was an increasing economic diversification and the replacement of cattle with small stock and, to some extent, cloven hoofed animals such as donkeys during and after rinderpest. Indeed, while cattle numbers had dropped significantly,²⁸⁸ people managed to keep substantial herds of goats, which would not be affected by the disease.²⁸⁹ Gardening and crop cultivation, i.e. tobacco, maize and sometimes wheat, increased significantly and were used both for subsistence farming as well as in small-scale trade.²⁹⁰

As we have seen, rinderpest's socio-economic impact in the realms of the raiding economy and of commercial trade was quite different to that of local subsistence economies. Furthermore, responses to the disease's advancement depended on geographical conditions and the possibility of protecting surviving herds and diversifying economic resources. Undoubtedly, the socio-economic transformation caused by rinderpest affected communities and individuals in different ways. The shifts in subsistence production described above most probably involved a reconstitution of agricultural work based on gender, with a tendency to have men involved in raiding, hunting and cattle-rearing on distant posts, while women increasingly employed for garden work and small stock husbandry.²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ See Kreike (2004) for Owambo, p. 37.

²⁸⁸ The earliest estimation of stock numbers in Sesfontein is by Viktor Franke and concern 1901. Franke counted 40 head of large stock. Needless to say that his estimation was very problematic, be it due to seasonal absence of stock, the local herders' mistrust of government censuses asf. See NAN A 560. Diary of Viktor Franke, unpublished transcription, p. 190.

²⁸⁹ NAN ZBU 149 A VI a, Band 7, Jahresberichte 1901/1902, Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung des Bezirks Outjo im Jahre 1901/1902, 18.6.1902; NAN ZBU 2030 Nama des Kaokoveldes (Topnaars von Zesfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893), Protokoll einer Erklärung von Salomon Richter (Zwartbooi-Hottentott), vor dem gefreiten Protokollführer Hausmann, Outjo, 21.6.1898.

²⁹⁰ RMG 2.499 a C/h 8 a, Franzfontein, Band 1, 1899–1906, Riechmann an die Deputation, 12.3.1903; NAN ZBU 147 A VI a 3, Band 2, Jahresbericht 1896/97, Jahresbericht, 28.6.1897; NAN ZBU 149 A VI a 3, Band 7, Jahresberichte 1901/1902, Anlage VI: Jahresbericht des Distrikts Zesfontein für die Zeit vom 1.4.1901 bis 31.3.1902.

²⁹¹ Kreike makes this point for Owambo, see Kreike (2004), p. 41. Evidence for Kaoko exclusively refers to male activities. One reference to men taking up work on farms and as wagon-drivers is known, see NAN ZBU 147 A VI a 3, Band 2, Jahresbericht 1896/97, Jahresbericht, 28.6.1897.

4.2. The Establishment of the Northern District

4.2.1. *Armed Conflicts and the beginnings of German colonial presence in Kaoko*

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, German colonial presence in the northern part of the colony developed only gradually and varied regionally, depending both on African responses and on colonial aims and interests. In the north-west, colonial claims emerged in the mid-1880s, when Cornelius Swartbooï of Fransfontein and Jan Uixamab of Sesfontein sold their respective territories, both falling into what by then was known as the Kaoko area, to August Lüderitz.²⁹² With these territories Lüderitz's company acquired the right of development and utilization of all mineral resources, while the captains reserved control over their places of residence and their pastures (these areas weren't specified, however). Only a few years later, in 1893, the German Colonial Society transferred all the rights it had acquired from Lüderitz to a London based enterprise, Hirsch and Co., later to be known as the Kaoko Land and Mining Company. Its on-site representative was Georg Hartmann.²⁹³

The treaties of 1885 are the first written documents through which the Oorlam leadership in the north-west formally expressed their claim to Kaoko and negotiated a detailed territorial outline of the region. The western border was marked by the Atlantic coast and did not cause any disagreement. Similarly, the northern border of Kaoko was determined to correspond with the Kunene River, from the Atlantic coast eastwards up to Swartbooisdrift, thus remaining south of the Portuguese possessions in southern Angola. Much more problematic, as we shall see, was the definition of Kaoko's southern border, i.e. its demarcation against those areas to the south claimed by Herero leaders, and the border to the east towards Owambo. Eventually, the southern border was marked by the Ugab River, following the river's course from the Atlantic coast eastwards up to the point where it crossed the 15th longitude. It was this cartographic point which eventually fixed the eastern border, denoted in an upwards direction by an imaginary line running east of Fransfontein, through Ombombo and Otjitambi, and eventually reaching Swartbooisdrift on the Kunene.²⁹⁴ The treaties between the Oorlam Captains in the north-west and the representatives of the concession companies paved the way for the German colonial government's involvement a decade later, which by the mid-1890s increasingly tried to establish itself in the northern

²⁹² NAN ZBU 1 A I a 2, Band 1, Verträge mit den Häuptlingen, 19.6.1888 and 4.7.1885; Goldblatt, I. (1971), *History of South West Africa from the beginning of the 19th century*. Cape Town, Wynberg, Johannesburg, p. 102.

²⁹³ NAN ZBU 2030 W II d 25 Band 1, Nama: Nama des Kaokofeldes (Topnaars von Zessfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893), Abschrift, 12.8.1893. The Kaoko Land and Mining Company was founded precisely to develop the north-western area.

²⁹⁴ NAN ZBU 2030 W II d 25 Band 1, Nama: Nama des Kaokofeldes (Topnaars von Zessfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893), Abschrift, 12.8.1893.

part of the territory.²⁹⁵ While Leutwein's attempts to force the Ondonga king, Kambonde, into a so-called *Schutzvertrag* (protection treaty) in 1895 failed,²⁹⁶ his strategic alliance with Hartman turned out to be more fruitful, and eventually led to treaties signed by both David Swartbooi, who had succeeded the deceased Cornelius Swartbooi in 1894, and Jan Uixamab, at Otjitambi in 1895 and 1898.²⁹⁷

How do we explain Swartbooi's and Uixamab's selling their land to German commercial enterprises in the mid-1880s, and their mid-1890s submission to treaties with a colonial government whose presence in the region had so far remained unobtrusive?

The property acquisitions by the Lüderitz brothers from 1884 onwards was crucial for the assertion and enforcement of German claims to colonial South West Africa against the British government and its representatives at the Cape.²⁹⁸ In 1884, the Lüderitz enterprises bought the coastal area of the Orange River mouth in the south of the territory and gradually advanced northwards, where they eventually acquired Kaoko in 1885.²⁹⁹ Lüderitz's main interest was in mineral resources, since expectations that they would find diamonds and gold had flourished in the region since the early 1880s. The signing of the treaties with the various African leaders usually involved a cash down payment and a lease to be paid, but, most significantly, it included the delivery of arms and ammunition to the African sellers.³⁰⁰ In fact, access to arms had been the main reason for Herero leaders in central Namibia to give out mining and land concessions,³⁰¹ particularly when colonial supervision of the arms trade increased. Similarly, Oorlam leadership's efforts to bind and control activities of commercial traders in Kaoko had, as we saw, proved successful since the late 1870s onwards. Consequently, the treaties with the Lüderitz enterprises in the mid-1880s fit into an existing commercial policy and potentially opened up new sources of income. We lack both archival and oral information on how the business connection between Lüderitz and the Oorlam leadership developed, but it seems as if it did not involve any further transactions. Indeed, the entire possessions of Lüderitz, whose business had increasingly faced financial crises, had been taken over by the German Colonial Society for SWA in 1885, and the years

²⁹⁵ On the significance of the concession companies, their role within German colonial policy and their aim to establish their sphere of influence from the mid-1880s onwards, see Henrichsen (1997), p. 415; also Drechsler (1985), p. 94.

²⁹⁶ Drechsler (1985), p. 97.

²⁹⁷ NAN ZBU 1 A I a Band 1, Verträge mit den Häuptlingen, Abschrift 19. Januar 1895 and Abschrift 30. September 1898, ZBU 146 A VI a Bd 1, Jahresberichte 1891/95, Jahresbericht 1894/95, n.d., copies of some of the treaties are also found under NAN BOU 1 B10Q, Landverkäufe im Kaokofeld, 1897–1913.

²⁹⁸ Henrichsen (1997), p. 415.

²⁹⁹ Drechsler (1985), pp. 33–36.

³⁰⁰ Drechsler (1985), p. 33.

³⁰¹ Henrichsen (1997), p. 414.

to come were marked by a general lack of activity on the side of the new company in the entire territory.³⁰² Likewise, when the Kaoko Land and Mining Company took over in 1893, things didn't change in terms of mining activities or mineral exploration. What did, however, change was the concession company's focus, which would gradually shift away from the mining sector towards land appropriation and, by 1898, the Kaoko Land and Mining Company had begun to sell farms to German and Boer settlers.³⁰³

Of much greater significance than the Oorlam leadership's involvement with the commercial companies were their contacts with the German colonial authorities in the mid-1890s and the ensuing negotiations of political power constellations in the north-west. Since the mid-1880s, the Germans had struggled to formalize their claims against the various Herero leaders (*ovahona*) in central Namibia, and had thereby been drawn into the political power play between Kamaharero in Okahandja, Manasse Tjiseseta in Omaruru and Kambazembi in the Waterberg area.³⁰⁴ In this context, the treaties with companies and the colonial authorities became one of the arenas in which the *ovahona* tried to delimit their spheres of influence.³⁰⁵ Claims to the north-western part of the territory had been particularly contested. In 1884 Kamaharero had enforced his claim to Kaoko as part of what he conceived of as Hereroland,³⁰⁶ a declaration that was meant to counter both rivalries from within the Herero society, as well as those by Oorlam adversaries.³⁰⁷ Kamaharero's ambitions were soon curtailed by Manasse Tjiseseta, who pursued his separatist strategy by hindering German advancement towards the north-west until 1894.³⁰⁸ Yet, the colonial authori-

³⁰² Drechsler (1985), p.41.

³⁰³ Kruger, G.P. (n.d.), *Outjo, 1885–1960*, p. 2, notes that on 3.10.1898 Jan Uixamab sold 4000ha of land, which constituted the farm Warmbad (Warmquelle), later taken over by Carl Schlettwein. In 1900 Schlettwein bought a further 20 000ha of land from Uixamab. The Kaoko Land and Mining Company did not continue to sell farms until the 1910s, partly due to unsettled disputes with the colonial authorities concerning the borders of Kaoko. The inconsistencies affected inter alia the place Otjitambi, the second farm of Schlettwein, claimed by the company and by the colonial government. See NAN BOU 1 B10Q, Landverkäufe im Kaokofeld, 1897–1913, e.g. „Der kaiserliche Gouverneur an das kaiserliche Bezirksamt Outjo, Windhoek, 18.9.1903. Drechsler notes that up to the late 1890s most concession companies did not sell land, but instead hoped to increase the value of their properties thanks to mineral exploration. By the end of the 19th century, i.e. from 1901 and significantly from 1903 onwards both the companies and the colonial government increased the sale of land to European settlers; Drechsler (1985), p. 123.

³⁰⁴ Henrichsen (1997), pp. 422/423; Drechsler (1985), pp. 90ff.

³⁰⁵ Henrichsen (1997), p. 423.

³⁰⁶ Henrichsen (1997), p. 415. Kamaharero had claimed Kaoko years before when he met W.C. Palgrave in Okahandja in 1880, see Stals (1991), p. 328.

³⁰⁷ Kamaharero and other Herero leaders had already been discarded by Lüderitz in favour of Oorlam rivals in the concession treaties for the areas along the Atlantic coast, see Drechsler (1985), pp. 35ff.

³⁰⁸ Henrichsen (1997), p.425.

ties took hold and in 1896 the northern district was officially proclaimed.³⁰⁹ While officially the district's main function was to prevent the penetration of rinderpest and was therefore authorized to control trade in stock,³¹⁰ politically it aimed at controlling the region between the two main adversaries of the colonial state in the area – Herero in central Namibia and Owambo further north. In view of these constellations, the Oorlam leadership in Fransfontein and Sesfontein skilfully enforced their own political agenda, which had included Kaoko since at least the late 1870s.³¹¹ The signing of the treaties with the German authorities in the mid-1890s enabled them to legitimise these political claims against their central Namibian rivals in the form of written documents. While the German government enthusiastically announced the settling of matters in the north-west in terms of their own ambitions and interests,³¹² their alleged diplomatic success would soon prove to be more than fragile and would face significant, although temporary, challenges.

As we saw earlier, the German colonial government had not been able to prevent the penetration of the rinderpest pandemic into Namibia and the disease spread over vast parts of the territory. The dramatic losses in cattle and the economic collapse of vast sections of the African societies led to a re-intensification of political and social conflicts all over the territory.³¹³ This was no less the case in north-western Namibia, where rinderpest undermined the economic basis of Oorlam hegemony in Kaoko. An initial confrontation led to a military battle in late 1898 at the Grootberg between a regional coalition of Herero and Oorlam leaders on one side and the German military troops led by captain von Estorff on the other.³¹⁴ There is but a limited amount of archival information on the conflict, which in many instances resembled German colonial policy in other parts of the territory. In the context of a dramatic socio-economic crisis, the Swartbooi leadership in Fransfontein had been increas-

³⁰⁹ NAN ZBU 147 A VI a 3, Band 2, Jahresbericht 1896/97, Hauptmann von Estorff, Jahresbericht, Otjo, 28.6.1897.

³¹⁰ NAN ZBU 147 A VI a 3, Band 2, Jahresbericht 1896/97, Hauptmann von Estorff, Jahresbericht, Otjo, 28.6.1897.

³¹¹ As presented to Palgrave in 1878, see Stals (1991), pp. 221&222.

³¹² NAN ZBU 147 A VI a 3, Band 2, Jahresbericht 1896/97, Hauptmann von Estorff, Jahresbericht, Otjo, 28.6.1897.

³¹³ See e.g. Werner (1998), pp. 42 & 43; Goldblatt (1971), pp. 126–128; Gewald, J.-B. (2000), *Colonization, Genocide and Resurgence: The Herero of Namibia 1890–1933*. In: Bollig, M. & Gewald, J.B. (eds), *People, Cattle, Land. Transformations of a Pastoral Society in Southwestern Africa*. Köln, pp. 187–226, here, pp. 198–201.

³¹⁴ NAN ZBU 147 A VI a 3 Band 3, Jahresberichte (über die Entwicklung des Schutzgebietes), 1896/1898, Bezirkshauptmannschaft Otjo, Jahresbericht, Otjo, 3.8.1898; Drechsler (1985), p. 110; Kruger (n.d.), p. 34. On participation in the Grootberg battle considered by some of the Owambo kings, among them Kambonde, and the intervention by Finnish missionary Rautanen to prevent them from supporting the Swartbooi and Topnaar uprising see Eirola (1992), pp. 82–84.

ingly preoccupied with conflicts over their political leadership, particularly after Cornelius Swartbooi died in 1884.³¹⁵ David Swartbooi managed to take over, partly because of his involvement in the diplomatic negotiations with the German troops leading to the protection treaties in 1895. But the German intervention in political matters was not appreciated and, in view of the economic crises caused by rinderpest, the political power play re-ignited. David Swartbooi's entanglement with the colonial authorities took its toll. He was removed from his post by von Estorff and replaced by his old rival Lazarus Swartbooi.³¹⁶ The ongoing power play between the *kapteins*, the involvement and repeated intervention by the German authorities and the gradual loss of land and resources this entailed eventually led to a rebellion from within the Swartbooi community by young, armed men,³¹⁷ who managed to mobilise Herero allies under Kambatta and to gain the support of Jan Uixamab and his followers from Sesfontein. The diplomatic strategy the Germans had pursued soon gave way to an aggressive military intervention and the eventual submission of the Oorlam leadership in the north-west. More than 500 people from the Fransfontein community, including women and children, were arrested and taken to Windhoek,³¹⁸ where they were forced into dependent work relationships. Some remained in this situation until 1906.³¹⁹ Twenty-five men identified as followers of Kambatta were charged in Omaruru as war traitors and sentenced to forced labour for several years. Similar drastic measures against Uixamab and his followers in Sesfontein were only abandoned because they would have required military resources and personnel, which the German colonial state didn't possess.³²⁰ Uixamab was instead forced into a formal protection treaty, charged 1000 piece of small stock to be paid to the authorities and requested to hand in all arms and ammunition he and his followers

³¹⁵ ELCRN X 14.32, Baumann, J. (1967), *Van Sending tot Kerk. 125 jaar rykse Sendingarbeid in Suidwes-Afrika*. Windhoek.

³¹⁶ NAN ZBU 147 A VI a 3 Band 3, Jahresberichte (über die Entwicklung des Schutzgebietes), 1896/1898, Bezirkshauptmannschaft Otjo, Jahresbericht, Otjo, 3.8.1898; Goldblatt (1971), p. 127.

³¹⁷ Henrichsen has described similar processes of social friction between Herero ovahona and young men from the community in view of increased socio-political pressure. The author also referred to the significance of Christian congregations as internal rivals to the political leaders and their power plays. See Henrichsen (1997), p. 413. Missionary Riechmann, who was in Fransfontein in 1898 also suggested, that the Christians didn't agree with the rivalries between the *kapteins* and the German intervention, ELCRN VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.11, Riechmann, H., Franzfontein, 2.5.1894.

³¹⁸ Goldblatt (1971), p. 128; Drechsler (1985), p. 110.

³¹⁹ Goldblatt (1971), p. 128.

³²⁰ RMG 2.499 C/h 8 a, Franzfontein, Band 1, 1899–1906, Riechmann an die Deputation, 12.4.1899; ELCRN VII. Franzfontein, VII 27.1., Alte Akten aus der Franzfonteiner Gemeinde, 1895–1904, Missionar Riechmann, Riechmann an die Deputation, 28.7.1899; Drechsler (1985), pp. 110 & 111.

possessed.³²¹ Although the Sesfontein leadership had endured the conflict relatively well compared to their southern allies, they could not prevent German penetration into Kaoko. Franke's opening of the Sesfontein police post in 1901 turned out to be an ironic symbol of a process of economic and political disintegration coming to its end.

4.2.2. *The Rhenish Mission Society in the northern district*

As we saw, by the late 1890s and in the context of a severe economic and political crisis caused by rinderpest, the Oorlam leadership in Fransfontein and Sesfontein found it increasingly challenging to prevent colonial penetration into their area, whether as commercial enterprises, European traders and settlers or, as we shall see, missionaries. Indeed, in the capitulation of the Swartbooï leadership, missionary Riechmann, the first member of the Rhenish mission society in the north-west, apparently had a finger in the pie.³²²

The missionary sources on the north-western district for the period between the mid-1880s and the early 1900s are fragmentary for two reasons: first, the military confrontations between the Oorlam leaders and the colonial troops in 1898 and in 1904 repeatedly interrupted mission work in southern Kaoko. Second, the early period of missionary work in the area was characterised less by the activity of the appointed German missionary than by the mission's reliance on local evangelists and teachers.

The Rhenish Mission Society's work in Kaoko began in response to letters written by Cornelius Swartbooï and by Jan Uixamab in which the *kapteins* asked the mission society to send teachers to their places of residence.³²³ In 1890, missionary Riechmann eventually opened the first mission station in the far north-west. While we lack oral or written information on the *kapteins'* motives, their initiative was probably rooted both in an attempt to keep the mission societies' advancement under control and to access the commercial and social capital mission work would imply.³²⁴ Yet, the German missionary faced serious difficulties from the very beginning. As we saw, in Fransfontein the local *kaptein's* death in 1894 gave way to an unstable political climate. The mid 1890s saw a period of drought and repeated losses of harvests; both factors forced the community to look for alternatives, i.e. to privilege the stock economy in order to cover subsistence needs and to migrate with their

³²¹ RMG 2.499 C/h 8 a, Franzfontein, Band 1, 1899–1906, Riechmann an die Deputation, 12.4.1899; ELCRN VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.11, Riechmann an die Deputation, 28.7.1899.

³²² Kruger (n.d.), p. 35; Drechsler (1985), p. 110.

³²³ ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.10, 11.3.1885, letter of Jan Uixamab and C I 1.40, Dannert to von Wangenheim, Omaruru, 6.3.1905 referring to the request of Cornelius Swartbooï.

³²⁴ McKittrick (2002), introduction, particularly, pp. 9 & 10.

herds in search of better pastures and water resources.³²⁵ David Swartbooï's appointment as *kaptein* in 1895 and his collaboration with the German authorities didn't alleviate the social tensions, but while Riechmann acknowledged the fragility of the decision, his interest in a stable mission congregation at Fransfontein eventually made him an ally and supporter of the new leadership.³²⁶ By 1897 his congregation was said to number 460 people, half the Swartbooï population in the area. The same year, Riechmann travelled to Sesfontein, where he left the mission work to a young evangelist, Nikodemus Kido.³²⁷ What had promised to become a successful missionary endeavour, as the missionary had in the meantime opened two further outposts maintained by African evangelists,³²⁸ was abruptly undone by the rinderpest pandemic hitting the region. Riechmann lost almost all his contacts with Sesfontein and the fragile Christian congregations threatened to fall apart for good.³²⁹ The economic crisis soon led to political confrontation, as we saw, and the military battle at Grootberg in 1898 indeed led to an almost hopeless situation in terms of the mission's aims. Fransfontein had seen a population exodus and the deportation of several hundred people. In 1899, Riechmann could only count 26 members of the Christian community remaining, half of which were impoverished Herero herders.³³⁰ The situation in Sesfontein appeared similar – the community had been reduced to 70 people, and faced the burden of severe war reparations to be paid to the German colonial state.³³¹

The collapse of the Rhenish Mission Society's activities in the north-west was nevertheless prevented by two factors. First, while the military conflicts and the economic crisis had been an unmanageable challenge to the missionary, it was not so to the local evangelists, who were part of the communities. Their work went on independently and secured the continuity of the Christian congregations, although rather small and dispersed. This was true for Kido in Sesfontein and for the teachers in Tsumasas and Otjitambi. No doubt, their position in both the mission and the local society increasingly enabled them to augment

³²⁵ ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.39, Riechmann an die Deputation, Fransfontein, 8.10.1893, and C I Riechmann an die Deputation, 2.5.1894.

³²⁶ ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.11, Riechmann an die Deputation, 17.4.1895.

³²⁷ ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.39, Riechmann an die Deputation, Fransfontein, 22.4.1897.

³²⁸ One at Tsumasas near the Brandberg, and one at Otjitambi.

³²⁹ ELCRN, VII. Franzfontein, VII 27.1., Alte Akten aus der Franzfonteiner Gemeinde, 1895–1904, Missionar Riechmann, Riechmann, 28.7.1899.

³³⁰ ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.39, Riechmann an die Deputation, 28.7.1899.

³³¹ ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.39, Riechmann an die Deputation, 28.7.1899.

their social status precisely in a situation of socio-economic unrest, in which the missionary lost any means to control the process of Christianisation.³³² A second factor was the gradual establishment of a German military presence in the region, in Outjo 1897 as the centre of the northern district and in Sesfontein in 1901. Both the colonial authorities and the mission had a strong interest in a sedentary population living in the vicinity,³³³ and the new military posts required a male and female workforce alike.³³⁴ But while there was general consent between the missionaries and the army officers in terms of supervising and disciplining Africans, the local evangelists soon encountered conflicts with the military troops. Not surprisingly, the narratives evolved around the relations between local women and German soldiers. While the missionary's reports, including the recycled ones authored by the teachers and evangelists, strictly opposed what they termed a moral decay;³³⁵ the few original letters by Nikodemus Kido from Sesfontein focused on cases of women being forced into sexual relations with German military personnel.³³⁶ The case of Sesfontein and Kido perhaps most strikingly illustrates the social and political tensions attached to the person and function of an independent evangelist in the late 19th century.³³⁷ While Kido managed to attain significant economic status and a social reputation within the Christian community, he could not advance in terms of political power.³³⁸ Up until 1904, he continuously had to negotiate the conditions of his work with both the German military troops and with the local leadership. His relations with Uixamab had been ambivalent, although the *kaptein* had shown some interest, at least in education.³³⁹ Kido apparently tried to discourage Uixamab from participating in the war in 1904, but failed.³⁴⁰ Jan Uixamab's successor

³³² Henrichsen makes a similar point for central Namibia, see Henrichsen (1997), p. 407.

³³³ This specific interest of the Rhenish mission society in Kaoko became most outspoken after 1904, when the mission asked the colonial government to forcefully remove the Zesfontein community to Fransfontein in order to raise the number of residents and hence to guarantee the continuity of the mission work. ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.39, Dannert to von Wangenheim, Omaruru, 6.3.1905.

³³⁴ ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.22, Brockmann, Outjo, end of August 1906.

³³⁵ ELCRN, VII. Franzfontein, VII 27.1., Alte Akten aus der Franzfonteiner Gemeinde, 1895–1904, Missionar Riechmann, Riechmann an das Bezirksamt Outjo, 9.5.1902,

³³⁶ RMG 2.499 a C/h 8 a, Riechmann an die Deputation, Franzfontein, 31.3.1902, which includes a letter by Nikodemus Kido taking up the issue.

³³⁷ Henrichsen (1997), p. 407.

³³⁸ Most interviewees talked to in Sesfontein in 2001 and 2002, whose families have been part of the local Evangelical-Lutheran congregation, stressed Kido's growing wealth and social status within the community, but his limited political influence. See e.g. interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 17.12.2002 and interview with Christina Awos, Sesfontein, 21.12.2001.

³³⁹ ELCRN, VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880 bis 1911, C I 1.40, Riechmann and die Deputation, Franzfontein, 16.4.1903.

³⁴⁰ RMG 2.524 a C/h 39 a, Outjo (mit Franzfontein und Zesfontein), Band 1, 1906–1922, Brock-

(after Uixamab was forcefully removed and killed) remained beyond the mission's and the evangelist's control.³⁴¹

4.3. Gender & conflict

This chapter is concerned with the period of Orlam expansion and establishment in Kaoko between the 1870s and the early 1900s. The focus has been on the analysis of the socio-economy of Oorlam rule, with its territorial base in two of the region's southern settlements, Sesfontein and Fransfontein. The political hegemony, which varied significantly through time and space, was based on the socio-political integration of local communities and their centralization at the residential centres as well as on a raiding economy aimed at accessing the two main assets of economic and political power – cattle and arms. These strategies had deep gender implications and affected men and women in profoundly different ways. With regard to the economic transformation of the local societies, shifts in the gendered organization of dependent work gradually led to the incorporation of predominantly young men into the raiding commandos and hence into the violent appropriation of cattle and the occupation of new pastures and water resources. Intensified agricultural subsistence production was carried out by female workers in order to cover increased demands for food. Yet, while this general pattern of labour division prevailed, particularly in those areas, where Oorlam presence was most stable, men and women continued to be involved in a variety of agricultural activities, enabling both to access crops and stock, be it through their own work or through family-based exchange relations. As we have seen, small-scale trade based on the exchange of food and tobacco and small stock husbandry remained an important strategy of survival for women and for men and generally for those communities, which remained on the margins of or outside the raiding economy.

Oorlam expansion into Kaoko followed, as we saw, the movement of a commercial frontier towards the north-west in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Interest in the region was mainly rooted in its dense game population and attracted both European and African hunters involved in the business with game. Hunting and raiding increasingly became entangled processes based on the availability of the new technologies of power – arms and ammunition. As a consequence, political leadership was reconfigured in terms of the economic transformation and local senior men increasingly came under pressure to control the circulation of arms and the direction of commercial trade. Commercial hunting offered lucrative

mann, Jahresbericht, Outjo, 30.8.1906.

³⁴¹ Jan Uixamab's successor was his son Levi Uixamab. Conflicts between the new kaptein and Nikodemus Kido continued, Schneider, K. (2001), *Der Weg nach Sesfontein*. Schermbeck, p. 67. Much later in 1941, Benjamin Kido, Nikodemus Kido's son, would indeed be appointed kaptein at Sesfontein, then by the South African administration.

options to younger generations, as many men enrolled as guides, carriers and hunters and thereby accessed alternative ways of accumulating stock and arms.

The three decades of Oorlam rule saw the raiding economy and the integration of the region into long-distance commercial trade networks transform the mechanisms of accumulation. This led to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. For many people living in the area it entailed a process of impoverishment, of physical dislocation and social disruption, particularly in the north-western part of Kaoko. The increased violence threatened the social and physical security of individuals and groups, and women and children became the most vulnerable targets of traders and raiders. If people managed to escape assault and capture, for example by retreating to the remote areas in the mountains or closer to the coast, women continued the economic diversification based on gardening, small stock and, if possible, localised small-scale trade, and were able in this way to guard the survival of the community under precarious conditions.

The colonial penetration into Kaoko by the late 1890s, including German military personnel as well as missionaries again restructured the socio-political conditions and changed gender relations significantly. The Rhenish Mission Society based its work in the north-western area mainly on local evangelists. These men operated independently on outposts far away from the missionary's control, particularly when economic or political crises forced people to change from sedentary back to more mobile forms of living. Christianity did offer young, ambitious men such as the evangelists opportunities to acquire new forms of social capital, although their roles within the local societies remained highly ambiguous. They often acted as intermediaries between the congregations and the missionary and, by 1898, increasingly between the community and the German military. In the context of increased colonial presence, the control over women – in terms of a productive, reproductive and moral economy – became a new arena of the daily political power plays between colonial authorities, local male leadership and the mission's representatives.

Part II

Gender & Colonial Counter Insurgency

1. The expeditions of Major Manning to Kaoko in 1917 and 1919

1.1. Introduction

In 1917, the resident commissioner of Owamboland, major C.N. Manning embarked on his first military expedition to Kaoko, the area adjoining the western margins of his ultimate field of activity. He left Outjo, the main north-western military station, in late July after he had arranged for a translator in Windhoek, the territory's capital, and organized horses, carriers, guides and materials.¹ Manning was joined by sergeant Botha and a patrol on its way to the former German police post in Sesfontein, where further troops under lieutenant Olivier were waiting for him.² Officially, the aim of the expedition was first to attend to cases of so-called "native unrest", second, to assess the circulation and availability of arms in the region, and finally to gather as much information as possible about the north-western area and its inhabitants. Yet, significantly, what had triggered the cumbersome and extravagant expedition to Kaoko was that earlier that year a delegation of men from Kaoko, including headman Muhona Katiti and his brother Karuwapa, had raised accusations of robbery and murder against headman Oorlog, i.e. Vita Tom, with the police stationed at Cauas Okawa in southern Kaoko. Immediately afterwards, Tom had travelled to Windhoek to repudiate the charges levelled against him and eventually convinced the administrator personally that he had been the victim of threats to his life and property.³ When rumours about conflicts among local leaders in Kaoko, who were said to be well-armed and supported by substantial numbers of followers, and an almost paranoid fear of eventual war threatening the territory, were raised by settlers around Outjo,⁴ the administration conceded the need to send military troops to the remote area.

Manning's expedition to Kaoko falls into the period of South African martial law in colonial Namibia, which began in 1915 after the capitulation of the German troops. In the historiography, the question of continuities and discontinuities encompassing the transition from one colonial regime to another has gained significance, and the early years of South African colonialism have generally been characterised as a period of tentative liberalism.⁵

¹ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld report by major Manning, 15. November, 1917. While Manning mentions the interpreter, a person said to be fluent in Otjiherero and Nama, he does not make explicit reference to the number of carriers and guides, although through the report, not least on the photographs included, the presence of at least 8 men becomes clear.

² NAN SWAA 2516, major Manning's report, H.C. du Preez, military constabulary, Omaruru, 28.12.1917.

³ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld report by major Manning, 15. November, 1917, p. 2.

⁴ NAN OCT 17 Z I, Native unrest Zessfontein etc., e.g. Report by lieutenant van Wijk, 29.11.1916, and H.B. Brodtkorb to colonel de Jager, Union forces, 30.3.1917.

⁵ See Emmett, T. (1999), *Popular resistance and the Roots of Nationalism in Namibia, 1915–1966*. Basel, pp. 65&66; Werner (1998), p. 72; Miescher (2009), p. 131.

Because the status of Namibia remained provisional pending an international settlement concerning the future of the former German colonial territories, the emergence and implementation of a coherent policy was delayed. While the new administration kept most of the laws and policies regulating African life, which had been introduced by the Germans, the military and political insecurity now present in the area favoured a more conciliatory approach to the African population.⁶ Consequently, South Africa cancelled some of the most repressive legislation, such as employers' rights to use corporal punishment against workers. South Africa re-introduced the right for Africans to own land and large stock under certain conditions,⁷ and reformulated regulations concerning labour relations in order to stabilize the supply of a labour force as soon as possible. The modified policies caused an outcry amongst the predominantly German settlers and increased hostilities between the farming community, which increasingly faced economic challenges, and the administration, which lacked experience and knowledge of local conditions in the new colony.⁸ The settlers' distrust of the new administration was linked to the recovery of African pastoral economies in the period of military rule in central and southern Namibia,⁹ and hence increased difficulties for the settlers with regard to the hire of agricultural labour. While working on farms remained an option for African pastoralists – one which provided access to land and grazing — people increasingly found ways to resist or bypass the system of wage labour and opted instead for peasant solutions.¹⁰ A complex repertoire of legal and illegal means of land and stock appropriation, ranging from squatting on occupied or deserted European-owned farms and on Crown land, to cattle thefts or temporary wage labour paid in stock, enabled Africans all over the southern and central areas of the territory to gradually establish themselves as independent stock owners.¹¹ As African pastoralists recovered economically, the settler population grew agitated and issued a shower of letters and petitions asking the colonial government for help. As the South African administration was eager to legitimise its claim to the territory and hence remained reluctant to intervene in the ways farmers requested, i.e. to force Africans into dependent agricultural labour. This situation only changed in 1921, when South Africa was eventually granted the Mandate by the League of Nations, and could therefore abandon its policy of benevolent paternalism in favour of the realities and requirements of a settler economy.¹²

⁶ Emmett (1999), p. 72; Werner (1998), p. 72; Miescher (2009), p. 131.

⁷ I.e. provided the Governor would give his permission.

⁸ Emmett (1999), p. 78; Werner (1998), pp. 61ff.; Miescher (2009), p. 131.

⁹ Silvester et al (1998), p. 16; Miescher (2009), p. 132.

¹⁰ Werner (1998), p.57.

¹¹ Emmett (1999), pp. 84–86; Werner (1998), pp. 58–60.

¹² Emmett (1999), p. 89.

While the economic rivalry between African and European farmers in central and southern Namibia existed, i.e. the question of land and labour was decisive for the early years of martial law, the situation in the northern areas proved essentially different. Recent work has explored these regional dynamics and discontinuities of early South African penetration both through time and space, which were determined not least by the ways Africans responded to the changing colonial situation.¹³ As we saw, the northern regions had been drawn into German colonialism in a more limited way than the southern and central areas, and the almost complete absence of settlers beyond the so-called Police Zone had spared the north the processes of land dispossession. When South Africa took over, they immediately focused their interest and attention on Owambo, linking up with the German attempts to secure a continuous flow of labour from the densely populated central northern areas.¹⁴ As we shall see, the military penetration of Owambo turned out to be decisive for the new administration's northern policies and the ways in which these would affect the more marginal areas in the east and west. Correspondingly, the historiography on northern Namibia has paid significant attention to the impact of the change of colonial power in 1915 on the various Owambo societies, particularly on Kwanyama; there has, however, been a tendency to neglect its influence beyond this. This holds true for Kaoko, and most scholarly work has accepted the assumption of a continuous marginality and insignificance of late German colonial and early South African presence in the region. While the expedition of major Manning in 1917 – followed by a second expedition in 1919 – is regularly mentioned,¹⁵ this has not led to an analytical exploration or contextualization of the first South African military endeavours in the region within the context of an emerging wider military intelligence and policy,¹⁶ which resulted in South Africa's explicit claim to northern Namibia.

¹³ Silvester et al (1998).

¹⁴ Hayes (1992), p. 239; McKittrick (2002), p. 152.

¹⁵ As we shall see Michael Bollig and John Friedman have addressed some issues involved in Manning's interventions in Kaoko, particularly concerning tribal divisions and political leadership, see Bollig (1999), p. 168; Friedman, J. (2005), *Making Politics, Making History: Chiefship and the Post-Apartheid State in Namibia*. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 31, Number 1: 23–51, here p. 27. Van Wolputte completely foregoes the relevance of Manning, see van Wolputte, S. (2007), *Cattle Works: Livestock Policy, Apartheid and Development in Northwest Namibia, ca. 1920–1980*. *African Studies*, 66, 1: 103–128, here p. 105.

¹⁶ The South African military administration openly referred to the linkage between their military policy in Owambo and the one in Kaoko, see e.g. SWAA 2379 A 158/4/3, Kaokoveld Native Unrest, 1916–48, Notes on an Interview between col. De Jager, maj. J.F. Herbst, lt. Becklen, with the native headman Oorlog, his younger brother and one of Oorlog's sons, at the office of the officer commanding troops, Gov. buildings, Windhoek, 6.6.1917, where col. de Jager explicitly exposed the role the case of Mandume in Oukwanyama played for the South African policy in the north.

1.2. South African military expeditions and early administration in northern Namibia

The incorporation of Owambo into the South African colonial empire took place, as Patricia Hayes has shown, within a specific set of circumstances that included the international war situation between 1914 and 1919, a famine ravaging the northern areas for several years, and the heightened importance of the northern frontier.¹⁷ While the Portuguese in Angola had attempted, in vain, to occupy Kwanyama under king Mandume in 1914, their increased deployment of military troops and their alliance with Boer and African mercenaries eventually enabled them to break Mandume's resistance and to push him and his followers out of southern Angola into northern Namibia.¹⁸ Namibia could partly absorb these forced immigrations. In the context of the ongoing drought and famine, however, the displacement of people and animals led to increased raiding of grain stores and stock resulting in a chaotic situation of general anarchy and banditry.¹⁹ In view of heightened pressure from both the Portuguese and from within his polity, the Kwanyama king was forced to accept British protection and a resident commissioner was stationed in his area. Yet, the strategic move proved highly risky; Mandume increasingly found himself embroiled in disputes with local headmen who contested his kingship and, at the same time, was confronted with two colonial powers trying to use the social crisis and the political intrigue in their favour. Eventually, a military expedition under Manning was sent to Kwanyama in February 1917, leading to the king's removal and killing.²⁰ The death of Mandume and the submission of Kwanyama allowed for South Africa's establishment of administrative structures in the northern part of the territory and secured its interest in a continuous flow of migrant labour.²¹ The first resident commissioner dispatched to Ondangwa was major Manning, in charge of administering the entire northern area and implementing the new colonial policy. While still under martial law, the early period of administration followed a pattern of indirect rule with minimal interference in tribal affairs and the least possible expenditure.²² Yet, the administration faced significant problems and needed to suppress the extensive cattle raids that continued to plague the Owambo region, the uncontrolled mobility of people and stock, illegal entries by European traders and "dubious" adventurers into the north and, most of all, the trade in arms and slaves.²³ In order to do so successfully, the resident commissioner

¹⁷ Hayes (1992), Chapter 5.

¹⁸ Goldblatt (1971), pp. 206&207.

¹⁹ Hayes (1992), p. 200; Mc Kittrick (2005), p. 145ff.

²⁰ Hayes (1992), p. 233; Emmett (1999), p. 174.

²¹ Emmett (1999), p. 174.

²² Hayes (1992), p. 240; Emmett (1999), p. 173.

²³ Hayes (1992), p. 242.

had to cooperate with local leaders, who the colonial government considered best able to control their subjects. In the centralized Owambo societies, such as the kingdoms of Kwanyama and Ondonga, the role of kings and headmen became highly ambivalent. On the one hand, the administration curtailed their powers, e.g. with regard to jurisdiction, and would not hesitate to remove them if they were uncooperative.²⁴ On the other hand, their intimacy with the South African colonial power could be used as a resource in internal rivalries and conflicts, and some political dignitaries, such as the young Ondonga king Martin Ka Dikwa, managed to stabilize themselves thanks to the colonial presence.²⁵ In western Owambo, where political structures and leadership were less centralized, the penetration of South African colonialism was even more ambiguous. Similar to what central Owambo experienced, western Owambo communities were gradually forced under larger political units, and the reinforcement of centralized political leadership significantly undermined the dynamic nature of the western polities.²⁶ In 1916 and 1917 the South African military led two expeditions to western Owambo with the intention of ending the raiding by eastern neighbours and suppressing the arms trade with Angola and with Kaoko. Indeed, the control of any and all contact between Owambo and Kaoko was among the main concerns of the resident commissioner from the start,²⁷ and partitioning the two regions remained a challenge to the administration for the decades to come. Naturally, this aim required a comparable intervention in Kaoko itself and, as we saw, when rumours of “native unrest” popped up, the logics of colonial aggression could unfold almost undisturbed.

1.3. The reports of Major Manning – narratives of counter insurgency

The reports of major Manning, resulting from his military expeditions in Kaoko in 1917 and 1919, can be read as a narrative or account of counter-insurgency in terms of Ranajit Guha’s theoretical perspective and the distinction he makes between various discourses on anti-colonial revolts.²⁸ As we shall see, the reports are an example of an immediate account produced by a colonial official, a primary discourse in Guha’s sense, which through its description of local conditions and its identification of the causes for socio-political conflict, aimed at establishing control over a region and its population. As we saw, Manning’s report raised all the issues at stake, i.e. “native unrest”, the circulation of and trade with arms and

²⁴ Hayes (1992), pp. 243–244; McKiitrick (2002), p. 170.

²⁵ Hayes (1992), p. 230.

²⁶ McKiitrick (2002), p. 156ff.

²⁷ Hayes (1992), p. 245.

²⁸ See Prakash, G. (1994), Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism. *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 5: 1475–1490, here p. 1479. For Guha on counter insurgency see Guha, R. (1983), The Prose of Counter-Insurgency. *Subaltern Studies II*: 1–42.

ammunition, and the need to collect information about Kaoko and its population. It is worth having a closer look at Manning's way of presenting his expertise.

The report of 1917 follows a strict chronological structure combined with a reconstruction of the route chosen and the sites visited. General topographic descriptions, indications of distances and the mapping of resources, particularly of rivers, springs and water holes, are carefully arranged into a pseudo-cartographic narrative.²⁹ In line with the requirements and interests of military expeditions and intelligence, Manning's main concern was to locate and evaluate pastures and water, a prerequisite for the survival of mounted troops moving across an inhospitable landscape. Old German maps such as those drawn by Hartmann and the German Kriegskarte,³⁰ or the Union Defence Map,³¹ legitimised Manning's assumptions in terms of a colonial military cartography while leaving room for proof-reading, improvement, completion and error detection. He paid particular attention to naming and spelling with an eye for indigenous multilingualism. His reports therefore include a variety of names for villages, water places and rivers. Furthermore, Manning needed to assess the suitability of roads through the north-western area, and he was therefore interested in identifying the common north-south and east-west migration routes — including those of people and animals, of Africans and Europeans, civilians and officials. Throughout his journey, Manning took great pains to either explore most of the roads himself or, alternatively, to collect as much information from local residents as possible. Visualising the results of his cartographic expertise became one of his main interests and when he eventually handed in his report, it included a completely updated map of Kaoko³² supplemented by a dozen black and white photographs, which showed mainly rivers, water sites and the expedition members on horseback. Manning repeatedly underlined the significance and coherence of his map and, implicitly, the relevance of this knowledge for the military administration.³³ The mapping and topographic description of Kaoko was but one layer in the commissioner's first attempt to assert himself as a competent and experienced representative of the military administration in the north and to assure the authorities in Windhoek that, regardless of fi-

²⁹ Manning did not apply scientific methods of cartography. His indications concerning distances and the location of sites were based on estimated time needed to reach a place either on horse or on foot. On pseudo-cartographic methods applied by police and military in colonial contexts see Demhardt, I.J. (2000), *Die Entschleierung Afrikas: deutsche Kartenbeiträge von August Petermann bis zum Kolonialkartographischen Institut. Forschen und Entdecken*. Gotha.

³⁰ See the maps by Georg Hartmann and the German Kriegskarte in the map collection of the National Archives of Namibia.

³¹ Demhardt (2000).

³² See the Manning Map in the map collection of the National Archives of Namibia.

³³ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 1.

nite material resources and limited colonial personnel in the area, the north-western region would be subdued without incident³⁴

The main issue in terms of controlling Kaoko was linked to its population, including German settlers in the Outjo district and the various African groups expected to reside there. Indeed, the agitation launched by the settlers with regard to “native unrest” suggested that there was potential rivalry between Europeans and Africans on the north-western border of the territory. At the same time, armed Africans no doubt constituted a significant challenge to the military administration. So what was the nature of this unrest, and how did Manning explain the causes and the dynamics of the conflict?

As we have already noted, two groups under the leadership of Vita Tom and Muhona Katiti had deliberately involved the colonial authorities by filing accusations against each other concerning cattle theft and murder. When Manning reached Sesfontein in southern Kaoko, where he planned to join additional troops, Vita Tom was already waiting for him.³⁵ Tom’s decision to approach the resident commissioner as soon as Manning entered Kaoko would prove to be strategically crucial, as Tom subsequently remained with the expedition and would determine the course of Manning’s journey.³⁶ Furthermore, it enabled one of the contesting parties to determine the way the South African official would perceive and eventually interpret the conflict. Indeed, before Manning met Muhona Katiti, he had spent several days with Tom and had gradually come under his influence. In his report, Manning dealt with the rivalry between the two men in a separate section.³⁷ In the commissioner’s view, the quarrel had its origins in a period when both Tom and Katiti were still residing in Angola and the disagreement centred on a complex history of disputes over cattle ownership. But Manning neither bothered to explore the nature of the complicated dispute, nor did he consider it necessary for the South African administration to involve itself in intrigues that lay beyond their immediate interest and influence.³⁸ What did concern the commissioner was the fact that the conflict was fought with arms, that it continued to involve property contestations and theft, and that it led to the recurring displacement of people and animals within the region. Obviously, both Tom and Katiti were involved in raiding and illegal trade, including in the southern part of Angola, where they would exchange stock for arms and alcohol.³⁹ Experience in Owambo had shown that trade in arms and ammunition

³⁴ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, pp. 61–62.

³⁵ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 7.

³⁶ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, pp. 14–15.

³⁷ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 53ff.

³⁸ McKittrick makes a similar point for the administration’s handling of dispute cases around cattle in Owambo, McKittrick (2002), p. 155.

³⁹ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 18 & p. 55.

and the raiding of stock and people were the problems that seriously undermined colonial legitimacy and control, and hence Manning's strategy exclusively focused on convincing the rival parties to put an end to their reciprocal robbery and to hand in their arms. While Tom allegedly cooperated with a conciliatory strategy, Muhona Katiti was submitted to a disciplinary fine, which required him to relinquish 62 head of small and large stock to the administration.⁴⁰ With regard to the political rivalry between Tom and Katiti, the commissioner had strategically decided to support the former, and his decision had exclusively been determined by the requirements of a future administration. Muhona Katiti and his followers were perceived as unreliable, constantly moving their homes and herds through the northern part of Kaoko and beyond the border into Angola and showing no wish to settle down. Furthermore, Katiti seemed to face serious challenges within his own ranks, repeatedly complaining to the commissioner about younger men who refused to accept his authority.⁴¹ Tom's acceptance appeared more consolidated, he had a primary place of residence in Otjijandjasemo in northern Kaoko, and apparently was on good terms with the remaining leaders in the region, including Kakurukouje in Ombepera⁴² and Levi Uixamab in Sesfontein.⁴³ Actually, Tom and his followers impressed Manning with their "civilised" and advanced manners and culture, which included their military discipline and organization⁴⁴ and, not least of all, Tom's multilingualism and the Christian influence among his community.⁴⁵

Manning's narrative throughout the report was very suggestive and obviously aimed at assuring foreseeable administrative control. He claimed to have resolved the arms issue and the illegal movement of stock and illegal trade, and believed he had successfully supported Vita Tom in establishing himself as the main political figure in the area. Prematurely, as we shall see, he affirmed Katiti's and Kakurukouje's acquiescence to Tom as the senior chief and stressed the latter's reliability as a partner to the authorities. Nevertheless, the report left no doubt that a number of issues remained unresolved, most prominent among these was the fact that a large portion of the population throughout the region did not associate itself with Katiti, Tom or Kakurukouje. Continuing movements of people and stock showed that issues of territoriality and of dominion were still contested and unresolved. Manning rightly sup-

⁴⁰ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 59.

⁴¹ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 59.

⁴² See Part I above.

⁴³ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 55 & p. 59. Levi Uixamab was the successor and son of Jan Uixamab, see Part I above.

⁴⁴ Hayes makes a similar point for early colonial perceptions of Oukwanyama, Hayes (1992), p. 191.

⁴⁵ Manning mentions e.g. the important influence of independent evangelists in Tom's following, making an impact all over Kaoko. NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 21 and p. 26.

posed that the arms and ammunition he confiscated constituted but a small portion of the ultimate holdings in the area. He was soon proved correct, and in 1919 the administration was forced to send the commissioner to Kaoko on a second trip, explicitly to systematically disarm the African population and to settle the political rivalries for good.⁴⁶

Beyond the question of potential African revolt, Manning's reporting duties included a general assessment of Kaoko's usefulness for the colonial economy. In contrast to the densely populated areas in Owambo, it was soon evident that the north-western part of the territory would not allow for the supply of labour. The commissioner vaguely estimated the total adult male population in Kaoko at a maximum of 1000 persons — a negligible number in terms of a systematic and continuous labour migration.⁴⁷ What seemed far more plausible to Manning was the region's suitability for large-scale cattle farming, particularly the areas to the south.⁴⁸ A number of farms in southern Kaoko, e.g. at Otjitambi, around the Grootberg area, at Otjimerungu, or at Warmquelle in the vicinity of Sesfontein, had proven to be favourable in terms of water and pasture and had attracted both European and African farmers.⁴⁹ As we shall see, southern Kaoko eventually saw the emergence of successful agricultural economies precisely because it was situated on the colonial periphery, offering specific opportunities to European settlers and African pastoralists alike. These particular circumstances had been among the reasons for the emergence of the decentralized and relatively independent African communities, which would preoccupy the South African administration from the very beginning of its north-western endeavour until the late 1920s.⁵⁰

2. Economic differentiation and re-pastoralization in Kaoko between 1910 and 1915

The change of colonial regime in northern Namibia has to be understood in terms of a gradual and discontinuous process, which took different forms throughout the region and depended on the ways it had to be negotiated with the local African communities. As the representative of the South African administration, Manning faced a situation in Kaoko, which, as we shall see, differed substantially from the one he encountered in central Owambo. These differences were partly determined by Kaoko's specific history of Oorlam intru-

⁴⁶ NAN SWAA 2516, Report by Major C.N. Manning re 2nd Tour Kaokoveld; Disarmament General, 25.8.1919.

⁴⁷ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 72.

⁴⁸ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 37 and particularly p. 68.

⁴⁹ E.g. at Otjimerungu (farm Kaross), where Manning found several Herero families residing on the farm, NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 15.11.1917, p. 4.

⁵⁰ As we shall see in Part III.

sion and conquest and the ways the north-western area had been affected by the economic and socio-political crisis caused by the rinderpest pandemic, which eventually lead to violent confrontations with the German colonial troops in southern Kaoko.⁵¹

For various reasons the period of transition between the final submission of the Oorlam leadership in Sesfontein in 1906 and the South African take-over in 1915 has not received attention in the historiography of Kaoko. This lack of scholarly interest is usually explained by the weakness of colonial presence and influence in the area in the early 1910s.⁵² While this might be true when compared to central and southern Namibia, there are some highly problematic implications in this argument. Most immediately, the idea of a historic stagnation or irrelevance of this specific time period, while claiming an argument which favours the indigenous perspective, implicitly reproduces a late German and early South African colonial discourse and its construction of Kaoko as a deserted region, static in terms of economic and political development.⁵³ Furthermore, there are methodological and conceptual reasons for the lack of interest. On the one hand, historical research on Kaoko has been almost exclusively formulated in terms of tribal or ethnic histories,⁵⁴ which focused on the Ovahimba people, i.e. those groups, which left the region as a result of the Oorlam raids and spent the early 1900s in southern Angola.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the change of colonial regimes and the situation of World War I implied a partial collapse of the few, embryonic German colonial structures, while the exodus of colonial agents from the area made reporting a very discontinuous process. Hence, the written archival material, which might have enabled us to reconstruct the history of Kaoko in the years between 1906 and 1915, is very fragmented. Yet there is, as we shall see, a continuous, albeit heterogeneous, written colonial discourse on Kaoko, fractured by the change of regimes, but nevertheless persistent through the instabilities of the early 1900s. The documents partly stem from German and South African military officers stationed in the north-western part of the territory; others emerged in the context of economic speculation and exploration in Kaoko during this period, and some information can be traced to the few reports by members of the Rhenish Mission Society, although their activities became – again – heavily curtailed by 1915. What has been much more relevant in this context has been oral information from the region, and local histori-

⁵¹ See Part I.

⁵² Bollig (1998a), p. 183–184; van Wolputte (2007), p. 105; Friedman (2005), p. 27.

⁵³ Examples of the late German discourse are e.g. found in the reports of the missionaries of the Rhenish Mission Society, such as Brockmann, Trey and Vedder. Manning himself would enforce and perpetuate this perception. We'll come back to these narratives later on.

⁵⁴ Among the authors mentioned, Michael Bollig has been the most cautious, usually declaring openly, that due to his focus, his work applies to northern Kaoko in particular. We return to the question of ethnic histories later in this Part.

⁵⁵ See Part I, chapter 3.4.

ographies from places which remained inhabited throughout the first two decades of the 20th century vividly provide a sense of how people recovered from the socio-economic crisis at the turn of the century. Indeed, various oral histories from southern and central Kaoko report the years of transition between German and South African colonial rule as a period of gradual repastoralization.

2.1. The socio-economy of Kaoko in the early 1910s

As we saw, Oorlam rule in Kaoko and the raiding economy established throughout the region had led to the exodus of a part of the population, while other groups managed to stay in the region and, at times, even negotiated forms of peaceful co-existence with the southern intruders.⁵⁶ While the raids and territorial expansion of the Sesfontein leadership and comandos did have disruptive effects on resources and often led to the social disintegration of entire communities, it also offered opportunities for some individuals (most prominently Kakurukouje of Ombepera) to accumulate substantial wealth and to consolidate themselves as political leaders or headmen. When the raiding economy collapsed, however, and many people left the region, the terms and parameters of a socio-economic recovery changed significantly. Kaoko's population had dropped, and the earliest information available from 1910 estimated no more than 1500 Africans living in the north-western part of the territory.⁵⁷ The remaining groups had apparently scattered over the vast region and had been partly driven to the margins – into the mountains in western Kaoko,⁵⁸ in the south towards the arid coastal regions and around the Etosha pan to the east.⁵⁹ The historiography suggests the collapse of the pastoral production, forcing people into survival strategies based on collecting food in the bush and hunting small game.⁶⁰

The few written documents available and oral information indicate that a more complex situation existed and hint at the beginning of a process of repastoralization. Neither written nor oral sources allow one to claim that the years between 1906 and 1915 saw a widespread rebuilding of large herds of cattle and a general prosperity shared by most people living in Kaoko. Indeed, the general circumstances could not have favoured such a significant eco-

⁵⁶ See Part I, Chapter 3.3.

⁵⁷ NAN ZBU 157 A VI a 3 Band 20, Jahresberichte 1909/1910, Bezirksamtmann Kraffts, Verwaltungsbericht für den Bezirk Outjo – Berichtsjahr 1.4.1909–31.3.1910, Outjo, 3.5.1910. The total African population in the Outjo district was estimated to reach 4057 people. See also Kruger (n.d.), p. 5, although the author unfortunately makes no reference to the sources used.

⁵⁸ Bollig (1998a), p. 178.

⁵⁹ NAN ZBU 154 A VI a 3 Band 15, Jahresberichte 1906/07, Jahresbericht Sesfontein, 9.4.1908 and NAN ZBU 156 A VI a 3 Band 19, Jahresberichte 1908/09, Jahresbericht Sesfontein, 1.4.1909.

⁶⁰ Bollig (1998a), p. 178; Bollig (1999), p. 79.

nomic upturn. The early 1910s were characterized by repeated droughts⁶¹ and accessing natural resources, such as water, wild food and game required increasing time and displacement over vast distances.⁶² Furthermore, threats to humans and animals remained an issue. While raids had become far less frequent, stock thefts and the forced deportation of people for compulsory labour perpetuated a situation of social insecurity.⁶³ Kakurukouje remained an influential leader, precisely because he was among the few men who had managed to keep arms and was therefore able to protect the remaining herds and people associated with him.⁶⁴ The economic recovery and the repastoralization therefore remained tenuous and uneven. It was mainly based, as we shall see, on small stock and on trade, both within Kaoko and beyond the region. It was sustained by decentralized systems of social organization, involving various communities loosely associated with each other through kin and trade,⁶⁵ but politically and territorially still fractured and dynamic.⁶⁶

How can we grasp the process of repastoralization in Kaoko in the period between 1906 and 1915? What were the dynamics of the recovery and its spatial variations throughout the region? Oral information does allow for the reconstruction of the strategies chosen by people who, against all odds, remained in Kaoko. Let us first consider developments in the central and northern parts of the region and later move on to southern Kaoko, where the conditions for the economic recovery were different, not least due to the geographical proximity to the emerging colonial farming economy, i.e. the presence of European settlers.

The most immediate material consequence of the raids and the rinderpest had been the uneven accumulation of stock and, in some parts of Kaoko, substantial losses of cattle. Mobility and economic diversification became the main survival strategies. Hunting small game and gathering wild food, which had continuously been part of the local economies, gained importance⁶⁷ and led to shifts in the gendered organization of subsistence. Women increasingly engaged in both activities and oral information repeatedly refers to the small parties of men and women, sometimes including children, combing through the bush in search of food, whenever there was the need to do so.⁶⁸ Gathering was primarily for sub-

⁶¹ ELCRN VII 27.13 und 27.14, Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo, 1908–1967, Trey, B., Jahresbericht 1912/13, o.D.

⁶² Interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002, Interview with Tobias Kaisuma, Warmquelle, 24.12.2001, Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002.

⁶³ Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002, interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002.

⁶⁴ Nitsche (1913).

⁶⁵ Bollig (1997), p. 16; interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002.

⁶⁶ Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002.

⁶⁷ Bollig (1998a), p. 178.

⁶⁸ Interview with Emily Kazombaruru Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002, interview with Kuairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002.

sistence, but the collection of wild plants, be it for medicinal use or for the production of perfumes, and honey also supported small-scale and very localized trade among women.⁶⁹ Hunting served both subsistence and trade and was much determined by the availability of hunting technologies, i.e. arms. Within local diets, the revenues from hunting small game were hazardous, dependent on rainfall, water resources and on game stocks and migrations.⁷⁰ Yet, the significance of game and, in particular, big game within transregional trade remained crucial and was fuelled by the continuing demand for ivory and ostrich eggs in the neighbouring Owambo societies.⁷¹ The availability and ownership of arms predominantly remained a privilege restricted to headmen, such as Kakurukouje and Tjongoha in Kaoko Otavi, or to male heads of households,⁷² but there were multiple ways of acquiring them. Arms were predominantly bought in western Owambo, although imports from Angola continued.⁷³ Ivory and ostrich eggs were usually traded for guns, yet in some cases cattle could be an acceptable currency.⁷⁴ Alternatively, arms were part of relationships of tribute and loyalty and given to young men living in Kaoko who were commissioned as dependent hunters or as herders.⁷⁵ While the exchange of arms for game products was considered a transaction involving equal trade partners, exchange based on tribute and loyalty often linked partners who, although geographically dispersed, were bound to each other through social obligations, such as the ones based on maternal kin.⁷⁶

Trade relations, particularly within Kaoko, were also based on products grown in gardens, most importantly tobacco.⁷⁷ Small-scale trade relations were vital for women in par-

⁶⁹ Interview with Emily Kazombaruru Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002, interview with Kuairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002. For historical continuities in the use of wild plants, see Sullivan (1998), pp. 63ff., although her focus is on southern Kaoko.

⁷⁰ Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002.

⁷¹ Nitsche (1913), pp. 594&595; Kuntz (1912), *Die Owatschimba im nördlichen Kaokoveld (Deutsch Südwest-Afrika)*. *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen*, 25: 206.

⁷² Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002.

⁷³ Interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002, referring to his grand-father Gorge Hartley; Kuntz (1912), p. 206.

⁷⁴ Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002.

⁷⁵ NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, 1900–1914, *Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokoveld*, Vedder, H., „An Herrn Bezirksamtman von Zastrow“, Gaub, 1.9.1914 and *Bezirksamtman Schultze*, Outjo, 30.1.1911; ZBU 158 A VI a 3 Band 23, *Jahresberichte 1910/1911*, Jahresbericht Outjo, 10.4.1911.

⁷⁶ Interview with Ngangurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002, interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002, interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002. The colonial documents forego the relevance of kinship in the context of trade relations with Owambo.

⁷⁷ NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, 1900–1914, *Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokoveld*, Vedder, H., „An Herrn Bezirksamtman von Zastrow“, Gaub, 1.9.1914; NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, 1900–1914, *Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokoveld*, Schultze, Bericht über eine Reise zur Erkundung des Kaokoveldes, 8.11.1912; interview

ticular, as these were among the few options available, besides inheritance, for women to access livestock. The various riverbeds, springs and wells constituted a network of resources that favoured the continuity of cultivation, particularly for communities with high mobility. Most women interviewed pointed out repeatedly that spring and rain gardens were both used to cover subsistence nutritional needs and enabled women and men to barter for goods they could not acquire locally.⁷⁸

Agriculture and hunting were the twin pillars of the gradual repastoralization in Kaoko in the early decades of the 20th century. Stock could be accessed through trade inside Kaoko, among neighbouring villages, or with partners in Owambo and southern Angola, again depending on kinship and other forms of social relations, or based on residence and mobility patterns.⁷⁹ As mentioned above, small stock definitely dominated the process for a variety of reasons. While pastoralists had to accommodate economic limitations and high prices for large stock in the north-western area in the early 1900s,⁸⁰ small stock was much less exposed to raiding and hence required less supervision.⁸¹ Besides that, small stock was better suited than cattle to the unfavourable water and pasture conditions during the drought the area experienced in this period.⁸² Although cattle were considered to be far more vulnerable to adverse conditions and to diseases, people began to buy large stock as soon as the situation allowed.⁸³ As local markets within the region almost exclusively offered small stock for barter in the early 1910s, buying cattle involved participation in long-distance trade, and hence the availability of a range of corresponding exchange goods.⁸⁴

with Jarerua Tjihoto, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002.

⁷⁸ Interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Nandu Tom Ndja, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Maririro Koviti Tjihurua, 9.5.2002.

⁷⁹ Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002; also see NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, 1900–1914, *Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokoveld*, Vedder, H., „An Herrn Bezirksamtmann von Zastrow“, Gaub, 1.9.1914; NAN ZBU 155 A VI a 3, Bd 16, *Jahresberichte 1907/08, Jahresbericht Sesfontein*, 9.4.1908.

⁸⁰ Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002. There is no written data on prices for or exchange value of stock in Kaoko in these years. Fluctuations in prices paid for stock in northern and north-western Namibia did not correspond to the ones in central Namibia, where the commercial farming sector and the international market were decisive. For central Namibia and price fluctuations during the re-peasantization after 1915 see Werner (1998), p. 65.

⁸¹ Interview with Emily Kazombaruru Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002, interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002.

⁸² NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, 1900–1914, *Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokoveld*, Schultze, Bericht über eine Reise zur Erkundung des Kaokoveldes, 8.11.1912; interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002 and interview with Ngangurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002.

⁸³ Kuntz (1912), S. 206; NAN ZBU 157 A VI a 3 Bd 20, *Jahresberichte 1909/10, Verwaltungsbericht Outjo*, 3.5.1910; NAN ZBU 160 A VI a 3 Bd 3, *Jahresberichte 1913/14, Jahresbericht Outjo*, 21.5.1914.

⁸⁴ Interview with Ngangurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002 and with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/

Although the years between 1907 and 1915 had seen harsh droughts and the remaining communities in Kaoko had dispersed to the outskirts of the region in the interests of survival, the gradual recovery and sluggish repastoralization process showed the first signs of success by 1912. Economic improvement remained influenced by social status and gender. The acquisition of large stock and the rebuilding of cattle herds remained an uneven process, preferentially involving relatively powerful or influential men. Women in general, who would rather use local and small-scale trade relations, continued to remain on the periphery of the cattle economy. Herds owned by women almost exclusively consisted of small stock in this period and in exceptional cases perhaps included one or two head of large stock.⁸⁵ The repastoralization process, however, did support socio-political independence. Most colonial reports from the early 1910s describe the decentralized settlement pattern and the high mobility of people in Kaoko.⁸⁶ Interviewees linked the increasing autonomy of single families and of small groups to the economic recovery, as the building up of herds allowed for more independence from political patronage and economic exploitation, not least by men such as Kakurukouje.⁸⁷

By 1914, just before the beginning of World War I, the changing situation in Kaoko came to the attention of the German colonial administration and also to the attention of the Rhenish Mission Society, which sent two of their members, missionaries Heinrich Vedder and Bernhard Trey, on a journey to Kaoko in order to explore the potential and feasibility of a missionary presence in the region.

As we saw earlier, the German colonial administration had failed to develop a coherent policy with regard to Kaoko in the early 1900s. Part of the region had been included in an extended game reserve in 1907, with its centre around the Etosha pan in the east.⁸⁸ By doing so, the colonial government declared commercial hunting in Kaoko illegal and thus created the precondition for the control of European and African mobility in and out of the region, as well as the circulation of goods, including stock.⁸⁹ Yet, southern Kaoko remained outside

Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002.

⁸⁵ Interview with Emily Kazombaruru Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002, interview with Kvairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002.

⁸⁶ E.g. Kuntz, J. (1913); NAN ZBU 155 A VI a 3 Bd 16, Jahresberichte 1908/09, Jahresbericht Sesfontein, 9.4.1908; NAN ZBU 158 A VI a 3 Bd 23, Jahresberichte 1910/11, Jahresbericht Outjo, 10.4.1911.

⁸⁷ Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002 and with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002.

⁸⁸ Miescher (2009), pp. 95ff. As Miescher shows, the declaration of the northern game reserves and the closing of Owambo were part of a process of securing the northern border area of the Police Zone.

⁸⁹ Miescher (2009), pp. 102ff. Closing down the main roads to southern Angola and controlling European and African mobility through the north is one aspect Miescher has referred to in the

the reserve, largely because the issue of future European settlement in the north-western area had not been resolved. Debates between the district administration in Outjo and the Kaoko Land and Mining Company gained new momentum by the early 1910s.⁹⁰ Hence, between 1910 and 1913 a number of expeditions ventured into Kaoko commissioned to explore the region's suitability for European farming⁹¹ or mineral exploration,⁹² and to assess the situation with regard to the numerical and economic strength of the local African population. The district commander Schultze, who travelled to Kaoko in 1912, noticed a significant increase of people living in the region, although most of the villages and temporary settlements he passed through had been left by people and herds before the official's arrival.⁹³ Mining company representative Julius Kuntz was luckier. On his several journeys, Kuntz met small communities of pastoralists along his way, and encountered numerous residents in Sesfontein, Kaoko Otavi and Ombepera (Kakurukouje's place). Based on information provided by local informants, he estimated the total population of Kaoko to have reached 5000 people in 1913.⁹⁴

Kuntz' estimation was confirmed by Vedder and Trey, who visited Kaoko in 1914 on behalf of the Rhenish Mission Society's committee. While the historiography on Kaoko has given some attention to Heinrich Vedder's report,⁹⁵ Bernhard Trey's account of the journey, which took him up to the Kunene River, has not been given any attention to date. The two missionaries left for the region in July 1914 at the beginning of the dry season and travelled together to Kaoko Otavi. Again, most of the large springs in southern Kaoko had been left by people who had migrated with their herds in search of pastures, or in order to protect their herds against theft and raids.⁹⁶ At and around Kaoko Otavi they met the first larger group of residents and Vedder decided to remain with the local headman, Tjongoha, while Trey was sent with a small delegation of translators and guides northwards to Ombepera where he intended to meet Kakurukouje.⁹⁷ Both missionaries noted the decentralized socio-political or-

context of the German colonial policy in northern Namibia.

⁹⁰ We'll come back to this point in the following chapter.

⁹¹ NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b5 Bd 2, Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokofeld 1900–1914, Schultze, Bericht über eine Reise zur Erkundung des Kaokofeldes, 8.11.1912.

⁹² Kuntz (1912), p. 206; Kuntz (1913), pp. 436ff.

⁹³ NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b5 Bd 2, Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokofeld 1900–1914, Schultze, Bericht über eine Reise zur Erkundung des Kaokofeldes, 8.11.1912.

⁹⁴ Kuntz (1913), pp. 436ff.

⁹⁵ Bollig (1998a), p. 182.

⁹⁶ ELCRN VI 27.13 & 27.14, Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo, 1909–67, Trey an die Deputation, Bericht über die Reise der Missionare Vedder und Trey ins Kaokoveld, 7.12.1914.

⁹⁷ NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, 1900–1914, Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokoveld, Vedder, H., „An Herrn Bezirksamtmann von Zastrow“, Gaub, 1.9.1914.

ganization of the local communities, termed “Owatschimba”,⁹⁸ which constituted a problem in terms of a missionary project.⁹⁹ While Tjongoha showed some interest in the mission and in having a local evangelist placed at his village,¹⁰⁰ Trey was rejected by Kakurukouje, who sent a messenger stating the headmen’s mistrust of Europeans and his reluctance against their further intrusion in his area.¹⁰¹ The missionary noted the increase of large stock the further northwards he moved, and when he reached Otjijandjasemo in northern Kaoko, he encountered substantial herds of small and large stock. Otjijandjasemo in particular elicited Trey’s astonishment. The place featured large gardens, where people grew vegetables and maize, and where huge stock enclosures (or kraals) evidenced a prosperous pastoral economy. Otjijandjasemo had grown into a residential centre, attracting local Owatshimba pastoralists and Herero families, which had left central Namibia during the colonial war of 1904–7 and had settled in northern Kaoko.¹⁰² Trey estimated the community to include more than 100 people, most of them considered to be exceptionally advanced in terms of culture and economic wellbeing. European dress, Christianity and education organized by a number of local evangelists and teachers eventually induced Trey to regard future mission work with some enthusiasm.

According to references in the German reports on Kaoko, the population in the north-western area nearly tripled from about 1500 to 5000 people between 1910 and 1914. Stock herds increased, usually only small stock, but occasionally including large stock as well. In most parts of the region economic diversification was based on hunting and gathering, the cultivation of food, grain and tobacco while stock rearing continued to characterise people’s subsistence and a gradual process of repastoralization also began. The missionary reports

⁹⁸ Owatschimba was the term used in the German reports in the early 20th century to describe the Otjiherero speaking communities in Kaoko, which were considered to be impoverished in terms of cattle ownership and culturally less advanced compared to the Christian Herero communities in central Namibia. Although Vedder and Trey acknowledged the decentralised character of the local societies, Vedder in particular showed keen interest in framing the situation in terms of ethnic affiliation and identity. We’ll discuss the ethnonyms and their eventual territorial anchorage by the South African administration later on.

⁹⁹ ELCRN VI 27.13 & 27.14, Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo, 1909–67, Trey an die Deputation, Bericht über die Reise der Missionare Vedder und Trey ins Kaokoveld, 7.12.1914.

¹⁰⁰ NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, 1900–1914, Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokoveld, Vedder, H., „An Herrn Bezirksamtmann von Zastrow“, Gaub, 1.9.1914. This was confirmed by interviewees in Kaoko Otavi, e.g. in the interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002.

¹⁰¹ ELCRN VI 27.13 & 27.14, Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo, 1909–67, Trey an die Deputation, Bericht über die Reise der Missionare Vedder und Trey ins Kaokoveld, 7.12.1914.

¹⁰² Trey’s description of Otjijandjasemo was confirmed by interviewees, e.g. interview with Ngangu-rupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 15.5.2002.

of 1914 corroborate oral information on the gradual recovery of the pastoral economy. Although the process occurred in the context of unfavourable climatic conditions and remained uneven depending, among other factors, on status and gender, on the eve of the change of colonial regimes, the repastoralization had shown its first signs of success. This was no less the case in southern Kaoko, although here the proximity to the settler economy in the Outjo district created a situation slightly different from that in the central and northern parts.

2.2. Southern Kaoko and entrenchments with the settler economy in the Outjo district

Southern Kaoko had been affected by German colonial intrusion in much more immediate ways, and the confiscation of cattle at Sesfontein in 1907 had been the formal marking of the settlement's gradual decline as a regional centre of power.¹⁰³ In 1908 the district commander estimated the population of Sesfontein to be about 240 people, of which 190 were women and children.¹⁰⁴ The colonial officer noted that most people had dispersed into the bush, a situation that would increasingly bother the local authorities, which blamed the people for causing substantial damage to local game stocks.¹⁰⁵ The district commander judged the economic development of the community to be rather modest, being based on small stock, gardening and, for a few young men and women, on temporary employment at the police station. But he also noticed a flourishing of activity at the local shop owned by Schlettwein (the representative of the Kaoko Land and Mining Company), where rice, blankets, flour and clothes were sold to Africans, who paid for the products they acquired with small stock.¹⁰⁶ The officer's curiosity was qualified – the 3000 head of small stock owned by the local community, which had lost its cattle to the colonial authorities just the year before, would substantially increase within a very short period to come. This pastoral recovery, which was mainly limited to Sesfontein, but would hold true for southern Kaoko as a whole, was linked to a number of causes, among them the ways Africans used the presence of a small settler community and a few military detachments in the Outjo district.

2.2.1. The settlement issue in the north-western district

As noted above, the question of European settlement in the north-western area of the territory regained significance after the colonial war of 1904–7 ended, yet discord between the Kaoko Land and Mining Company, which formally owned the right to sell out farms in the region, and the colonial authorities continued. The German government was ambivalent

¹⁰³ See part I above.

¹⁰⁴ NAN ZBU 155 AVI a 3 Band 16, Jahresberichte 1907/08, Jahresbericht Sesfontein, 9.4.1908.

¹⁰⁵ NAN ZBU 156 A VI a 3 Band 19, Jahresberichte 1908/09, Jahresbericht Sesfontein, 1.4.1909.

¹⁰⁶ NAN ZBU 155 AVI a 3 Band 16, Jahresberichte 1907/08, Jahresbericht Sesfontein, 9.4.1908.

with regard to the expansion of settlers into Kaoko, and generally with Europeans buying farms outside the Police Zone.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, by 1909 the authorities had to acknowledge that there was a discrepancy between the Police Zone boundary, theoretically marking the limits of European settlement in the colony, and the development and spread of commercial farming areas.¹⁰⁸ Even though the government repeatedly reiterated its inability and unwillingness to extend police control beyond the Police Zone, they could not prevent the settlement of farms lying outside this area. While the government did not question the right of the concession and land companies to sell off land in these areas, the colonial authorities had asked the companies to abstain from doing so; they had limited success.¹⁰⁹ The situation in the northern districts was specific, where the Police Zone boundary simultaneously functioned as a veterinary boundary.¹¹⁰ Since the experience of rinderpest in 1897, veterinary concerns had come to the forefront of central government policies, and farmers moving their stock to the outskirts of the colony, where they would come into close contact with African-owned animals, produced serious unease among the officers in charge. Controlling mobility both of people and stock was hence considered crucial in the north. The local authorities in the districts, however, had their own vision of how European settlement in their respective area was meant to develop.¹¹¹ Kaoko lay beyond the Police Zone and most of the region fell into a game reserve. This created unfavourable conditions and was accordingly criticised by the Outjo officials on several occasions.¹¹² In 1909, a number of farmers had settled in the vicinity of Outjo along the perennial Ugab River and its tributaries or at permanent springs,¹¹³ yet the colonial authorities were far from satisfied with the Kaoko Land and Mining Company's efforts. The district commander in Outjo directly accused the company of rejecting prospective buyers and instead pursuing its speculation interests.¹¹⁴ To push the settlement of farms further, the government removed the company's right to sell land and, in 1911, the district office in Outjo was formally charged with allotting farms to German and Boer settlers.¹¹⁵ In fact, interest in farms in Kaoko had been significant and by 1910

¹⁰⁷ Miescher (2009), pp. 86ff.

¹⁰⁸ Miescher (2009), p. 88.

¹⁰⁹ NAN BOU 1 B 10 Q, Landverkäufe im Kaoveld 1897–1913, 35. Hintrager in Vertretung des kaiserlichen Gouverneurs and die KLMG, Warmbad Nord, Windhuk, 11.6.1907; Miescher (2009), p. 33.

¹¹⁰ Miescher (2009), p. 122.

¹¹¹ Miescher (2009), p. 89.

¹¹² NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokofeld 1900–1914, Schultze, Bericht über eine Reise zur Erkundung des Kaokofeldes, 8.11.1912.

¹¹³ For a detailed chronology of farms bought in the Outjo district see Kruger (n.d.), pp. 15ff.

¹¹⁴ NAN ZBU 158 A VI a 3 Band 23, Jahresberichte 1910/11, Jahresbericht Outjo, 10.4.1911.

¹¹⁵ NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokofeld 1900–1914, Schultze, Bericht über eine Reise zur Erkundung des Kaokofeldes, 8.11.1912.

the Kaoko Land and Mining Company had received at least 50 applications by farmers.¹¹⁶ While in some areas the lack of police control had made farm acquisitions unattractive, on the northern borders of the colony the weak presence of the colonial state and its supervising bodies specifically favoured the emergence of entangled economies, offering, as we shall see, particular incentives for both Europeans and for Africans in hunting,¹¹⁷ and smuggling or trading stock and other commodities.¹¹⁸

2.2.2. *Entangled economies*

Two issues dominate the colonial reports on the southern part of the north-western region between 1908 and 1914. As we saw, the African population in southern Kaoko characteristically lived in small groups dispersed throughout the region and the high mobility of people was a serious challenge to the colonial authorities. In that sense the settled community in Sesfontein had become the exception rather than the rule. Linked to the lack of control over these mobile groups were cases of cattle theft popping up in the documents over and over again and increasingly determining the colonial policies and interventions in Kaoko. Neither issue was unique to the north-western region. On the contrary, both problems were concerns in vast areas of colonial Namibia in the early decades of the 1900s.

The German administration in the north struggled with what was at the time referred to as the “Bushman plague”, meaning small groups of Africans living scattered in the bush, and robbing both farmers in the northern districts and migrant workers on their way to or from Owambo.¹¹⁹ The assaults came to the administration’s attention by 1909 and had reached significant levels in 1911. They were worst on the road from Okaukuejo to Outjo, then the main route for workers and travellers moving between the central and northern areas of the colony. The colonial government’s response was rigorous and hundreds of police patrols were sent out to assess the situation and to arrest any suspects. Settlers residing in the district were no less brutal in their ways of dealing with the threats posed by Africans who had managed to escape colonial control and supervision; the farmers would not hesitate to shoot people as soon as they felt their property and lives threatened.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Kruger (n.d.), p. 8. In 1911 the district commander stated that nine farms had been sold in the entire Outjo district. NAN ZBU 158 A VI a 3 Band 23, Jahresberichte 1910/11, Jahresbericht Outjo, 10.4.1911.

¹¹⁷ NAN BOU 1 B10Q, Landverkäufe im Kaokofeld, 1897–1913, 33. C. Schlettwein an die KLMG Berlin, Otjitambi, 3.7. 1907.

¹¹⁸ Miescher (2009), p. 114.

¹¹⁹ Miescher (2009), pp. 128ff. Miescher’s discussion of the so-called Bushman problem in northern Namibia Miescher relies on Robert Gordon’s work, see Gordon, R. J. (1992), *The Bushman Myth: The Making of a Namibian Underclass*. Boulder and Oxford.

¹²⁰ Miescher (2009), p. 119.

In north-western Namibia the conflicts between the colonial administration, the settler community and independent Africans were influenced by the specific geographical conditions. Southern Kaoko and the areas towards the Atlantic coast offered enormous possibilities for escape and retreat.¹²¹ The few police and military personnel stationed in the Outjo district¹²² did not possess the means or resources to control the many small, scattered and highly mobile groups of Africans who lived of hunting, collecting veld food, and small stock husbandry. The administration blamed “vagrant Bushmen and Bergdamara” for causing substantial damage to game stock,¹²³ for terrorizing the district with regular raids on cattle herds owned by the local European farmers and for robbing migrant workers.¹²⁴ Hence, the aim to put an end to the thefts and to settle people permanently soon figured as a priority for the district administration. Curtailing mobility and forcing Africans to settle down was a paradigmatic aim and necessity of the colonial state, but the question of control had its economic calculation, too.¹²⁵ All over the northern districts where, in the early 1910s, the local commercial farming sector faced difficult structural conditions in terms of water, infrastructure and capital, the availability of cheap African farm labour was particularly important.¹²⁶ Farmers in the Outjo district regularly complained about undisciplined farm workers deserting the farms whenever they found alternatives. Driven by their own interests, the settlers linked the shortage of farm work to the inability of the district administration to control the Africans “roaming around” and stealing stock and whatever property they could.¹²⁷

Stock theft was indeed one strategy within the process of repastoralization in southern Kaoko. While only the cases affecting European settlers came to the administration’s atten-

¹²¹ Werner points to the favourable conditions in the northern districts for Africans to evade police control. Werner (1998), p. 60.

¹²² The numbers of policemen and military personnel in the district were not stable between 1907 and 1910, but they remained small throughout the period. Only in 1910 did the colonial government station more officers in the northern districts in order to cope with the thefts and attacks on migrant workers. See NAN ZBU 157 A VI a 3 Band 20, Jahresberichte 1909/10, Verwaltungsbericht für den Bezirk Outjo, Berichtsjahr 1.4.1909 bis 31.3.1910, Outjo, 3.5.1910. By then seven police stations in the entire district were equipped with 24 officers.

¹²³ NAN ZBU 156 A VI a 3 Band 19, Jahresberichte 1908/09, Jahresbericht Sesfontein, 1.4.1909.

¹²⁴ NAN ZBU 159 A VI a 3 Band 25, Jahresberichte 1910/11, Jahresbericht Outjo, 10.4.1911.

¹²⁵ Werner (1998), p. 61.

¹²⁶ NAN ZBU 159 A VI a 3 Band 25, Jahresberichte 1910/11, Jahresbericht Outjo, 10.4.1911.

¹²⁷ Farmers blaming the administration’s inability to control Africans was not specific to Kaoko and was the case in many regions in colonial Namibia in the early decades of the 20th century. See e.g. For southern Namibia Silvester, J. (1998), *Beasts, Boundaries & Buildings. The Survival and creation of Pastoral Economies in southern Namibia 1915–35*. In Hayes et al, p. 98. The district commander in Outjo in fact noted that the mistreatment of workers was at least as much a reason for the lack of farm labour, see NAN ZBU 159 A VI a 3 Band 25, Jahresberichte 1910/11, Jahresbericht Outjo, 10.4.1911.

tion (stealing small and large stock was by far limited to the colonial farming sector), this also took place among African pastoralists.¹²⁸ The illegal appropriation of stock and game was but one means of securing subsistence and sustaining local economies,¹²⁹ which gradually recovered from the period of violent conflicts and economic collapse between 1904 and 1907.¹³⁰

Economic diversification again played an important role particularly as droughts between 1909 and 1914 hit southern Kaoko and the entire Outjo district.¹³¹ While stock thefts continued,¹³² the legal acquisition of cattle and small stock increased, particularly after the government lifted the ban imposed on Sesfontein and Fransfontein preventing the ownership of large stock in 1911.¹³³ Just the year before, the district commander had noted that Africans around the Outjo district had begun to rebuild herds and stock numbers were increasing.¹³⁴ Trade was one way of acquiring stock, which linked African pastoralists, settlers and the missionaries.¹³⁵ Indeed, the Rhenish Mission Society was quite entrepreneurial, and missionary Trey appreciated the willingness of the various congregations in the district to deliver stock for services and material support offered by the church.¹³⁶

In contrast to the archival documents, which focus on cattle thefts, oral information from the region is more nuanced in its descriptions of relations to settlers, and recounts cases of farmers selling stock to Africans, although these transactions remained exceptional.¹³⁷ Generally, Africans preferred to buy and sell stock amongst themselves. They also used other options provided by the colonial economy, as we shall see. Garden products and, most importantly, tobacco were significant currency in southern Kaoko and favoured people's involvement in small-scale trade activities. The natural springs and the Ugab River system, which stretched throughout southern Kaoko, offered favourable conditions for gardening.

¹²⁸ Interview with Samuël Ganuseb, Sesfontein, no date.

¹²⁹ For central Namibia see Werner (1998), pp. 58 & 59.

¹³⁰ As shown in part I.

¹³¹ ELCRN VII 27.13. & 27.14, Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo, 1909–1967, Brockmann, Jahresbericht für Outjo für 1909, n.d. and Trey, Jahresbericht für Outjo, 1912–1913, n.d.

¹³² ELCRN VII 27.13. & 27.14, Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo, 1909–1967, Trey, Quartalsbericht für Outjo, 1912, 31.7.1912.

¹³³ RMG 2.524 a C/h 39a, Outjo (mit Franzfontein und Zesfontein), Band 1, 1906–22, Brockmann, Quartalsbericht 1912, 4.1.1911.

¹³⁴ NAN ZBU 157 A VI a 3 Band 20, Jahresberichte 1909/10, Verwaltungsbericht Outjo, 3.5.1910.

¹³⁵ Miescher makes a similar point for the area on the boundary between Owambo and central Namibia. Miescher (2009), p. 122.

¹³⁶ RMG 2.524 a C/h 39a, Band 1, 1906–22, Outjo (mit Franzfontein und Zesfontein), Trey, Quartalsbericht Outjo, 1911, 26.7.1911.

¹³⁷ Interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001, interview with Samuel Ganuseb, Sesfontein, no date.

Sesfontein-grown tobacco was known as far as Owambo, northern Kaoko and southern Angola, and was sold either locally¹³⁸ or throughout the region by men and particularly women travelling to the east and north.¹³⁹

The presence of the colonial administration, the settlers and the mission offered work opportunities, which were organized informally.¹⁴⁰ The density of the population in the north-west was low compared to Owambo, and the German colonial state had not pursued a systematic labour recruitment policy in the Outjo district. However, Africans in the region were reluctant to submit themselves to farm work and did so only temporarily.¹⁴¹ Farm work was an option particularly chosen by young men, but could involve entire families or small communities. The farm Otjitambi was said to have a big African community in 1909.¹⁴² When the farm owner Schlettwein asked the Rhenish Mission Society to place a teacher and evangelist on his farm, his main aim was to deter Africans working and living on Otjitambi from leaving the farm as soon as opportunity arose.¹⁴³ The actual economic motor in the Outjo district in the early 1910s was, however, the military station in Outjo itself, and the various police posts in southern Kaoko.¹⁴⁴ When the military detachment temporarily left Outjo in 1912¹⁴⁵ due to drought, the settlement lost nearly its entire African population within a few days. The mission almost decided to close down its north-western outpost, and Trey welcomed the relief when the troops returned in 1913, and Africans moved in again.¹⁴⁶ Work at the military and police stations included both men and women, although the working conditions were almost as bad as on the farms and were characterized by violent assaults and sexual harassment by soldiers.¹⁴⁷

The variety of economic options, the peculiarity of geographic conditions and the weakness of the colonial administration in southern Kaoko enabled Africans to at least partly

¹³⁸ NAN ZBU 155 A VI a 3, Band 16, Jahresberichte 1907/08, Jahresbericht Sesfontein, 9.4.1908.

¹³⁹ RMG 2.524 a C/h 39a, Band 1, 1906–22, Outjo (mit Franzfontein und Zesfontein), Trey, Quartalsbericht Outjo, 1911, 26.7.1911.

¹⁴⁰ Silvester has described similar strategies for southern Namibia, see Silvester (1998), p. 96.

¹⁴¹ Interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe/Sesfontein, 27.12.2001.

¹⁴² ELCRN VI & VII, Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen, 1880–1911, C I 1.24a, Brockmann, Jahresbericht 1909, 20.4.1909.

¹⁴³ ELCRN VII 27.13. & 27.14, Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo, 1909–1967, Trey, Quartalbericht Outjo 1911, 26.7.1911.

¹⁴⁴ NAN ZBU 158 A VI a 3 Band 23, Jahresberichte 1910/11, Jahresbericht Outjo, 10.4.1911.

¹⁴⁵ ELCRN VII 27.13. & 27.14, Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo, 1909–1967, Trey, Jahresbericht Outjo 1912, n.d.

¹⁴⁶ A further drought soon forced the troops to leave Outjo again, ELCRN VII 27.13. & 27.14, Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo, 1909–1967, Trey, Quartalbericht Outjo 1914, 8.1.1914.

¹⁴⁷ ELCRN VII 27.13. & 27.14, Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo, 1909–1967, Brockmann, Quartalbericht für Outjo 1909, 14.10.1909.

negotiate the terms of their involvement and incorporation into the colonial economy. While conflicts between settlers and African pastoralists continued up until 1914, centering around issues of stock ownership, squatting on land, and the use of pastures and water resources,¹⁴⁸ it was precisely these opportunities which emerged on the periphery of the colony that supported both the settlers and the African pastoralists engaged in rebuilding their herds.¹⁴⁹

Let us briefly summarize: On the eve of the shift in colonial power in Namibia, the north-western part of the region experienced a tentative, almost unnoticeable, process of economic stabilization. This occurred despite the structural conditions being rather unfriendly, as many people had left the region and repeated droughts posed severe challenges to the survival of the remaining communities. Based on oral information and on the fragmented archival material, this chapter has aimed to sketch aspects of the strategies people chose to face the crisis and to reconstruct their economic and social livelihoods. It has been argued that economic diversification and high mobility were the preconditions for the gradual repastoralization in Kaoko between 1907 and 1914. The combination of gardening, hunting, collecting food in the bush and small stock rearing covered people's subsistence needs, enabling them to adapt to the fragile ecological and climatic conditions and to cushion critical situations caused by droughts or by the incursion of raiders. Increased mobility, be it due to the requirements of managing scarce pastures and water resources and protecting herds, or aimed at strengthening trade relations, supported the communities' economic recovery and enabled them to choose between various options of political affiliation. As has been shown, the process of repastoralization was a diverse and complex one; social status, gender and geographic location were determinant variables. While women were active agents in an economy based on gardening and small stock, and could enlarge their property through their involvement in small-scale trade, men were better able to improve their own situation thanks to the continuation of hunting cooperations with neighbours in western Owambo communities. In southern Kaoko, men and women made use of their proximity to the settler economy. Informally organized and temporary employment on farms or on the few police and military stations (Sesfontein and Outjo most importantly) provided additional sources of income which could be used for the acquisition of small stock and, although on a smaller scale, of large stock as well.

The process of repastoralization and of economic recovery remained a fragile one, yet by 1912 it was recognized by the colonial officers and the missionaries stationed in the

¹⁴⁸ NAN ZBU 158 A VI a 3 Band 23, Jahresberichte 1910/11, Jahresbericht Outjo, 10.4.1911. For a discussion considering the entire Police Zone see Werner (1998), pp. 60ff.

¹⁴⁹ On specific opportunities of colonial peripheries in southern Namibia see Silvester (1998), p. 95.

north-west, and the first signs of success could be ascertained all over the region. Yet, just a few years later, development would again face disruptive challenges. The changing colonial situation was partly responsible for this, but the region was more significantly affected by the influx of various groups into Kaoko from the north.

3. Immigrations to Kaoko

3.1. Introduction

Dating the immigrations into Kaoko from southern Angola remains a complex issue. Moving back and forth across the Kunene River has been part and parcel of the regional economy of most societies living along the northern river, be it in Kaoko or Owambo.¹⁵⁰ Portuguese and German colonialism repeatedly placed restrictions on African mobility in northern Namibia, but the genesis of the Kunene as an effective border between two distinct colonial territories was a process that took decades and continued far into the 20th century, depending on space and on responses by the local communities.¹⁵¹ This was the case in Kaoko, and the permeability of the northern border, as well as the socio-economic entrenchment of people north and south of the river, might explain the reluctance of historians to unambiguously date the beginning of immigrations into Kaoko from southern Angola in the 1910s. Scholarly work and archival documents both acknowledge the southward movement of small groups—sometimes just single families—by 1912. These groups crossed the Kunene to look for pastures and places of temporary settlement.¹⁵² As we shall see, these early immigrants and their herds were usually absorbed into the local communities and economies without causing pressure on resources or friction within the political landscape. What would be significantly different was the immigration of powerful, well-armed groups of people with huge herds of cattle, led by ambitious men such as Vita Tom and Muhona Katiti. Their arrival transformed the political and economic situation in Kaoko dramatically, and they therefore figure prominently in the oral and written historiographies on Kaoko. The arrival of these numerous groups has been explained by a number of factors, such as conflicts with the Portuguese colonial authority, pending legal cases against some of the leading men and shifting power-constellations in southern Angola, where the presence of the colonial state was increasingly felt.¹⁵³ Indeed, crossing international boundaries was a

¹⁵⁰ For Owambo see Hayes (1992), pp. 19–20; for Kaoko see Bollig (1999), pp. 75–77, and part I chapter 2 above.

¹⁵¹ We will come back to the northern border issue. For Owambo see Hayes (1992), pp. 264ff.

¹⁵² Bollig (1998a), p. 184; Green (1952), pp. 72–74; NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, 1917, pp. 53ff.

¹⁵³ For Portuguese presence in southern Angola see Clarence-Smith (1979), p. 19.

strategy regularly chosen by people trying to evade colonial control and supervision in different areas of Namibia. On the other hand, the historiography has underlined the significance of the change of colonial power in Namibia, and the expectations that the collapse of the German government raised among African communities.¹⁵⁴ All these factors certainly played a role, which will be explored in more detail below. Yet, the following chapter will try to show that there were further layers to the significant dislocation of people and their herds in the mid-1910s, including incentives that developed from within Kaoko's African societies.

3.2. Negotiating residence – Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom

As we saw previously, oral information and archival material on the immigrations to Kaoko from the early 1910s onwards suggest a distinction between two manifestations of these movements in terms of their scale and the ways in which they were absorbed into the socio-political landscape of the region. Oral information from central and northern Kaoko recounts family histories in which small groups, at times single households, are said to have crossed the Kunene into Kaoko and eventually settled down at various places in the northern and central parts of the region.¹⁵⁵ These movements seem to have been motivated by a variety of factors and largely depended on economic necessities or requirements for new pastures and water resources. Yet, what most influenced the routes people chose and the conditions of their arrival in Kaoko were social affiliations and obligations, usually embedded within networks based on kinship¹⁵⁶ and, at times, enforced by narratives of provenance, explaining the southward move in terms of a return to ancestral lands, located both in Kaoko or in central Namibia.¹⁵⁷ The importance of kinship relations and of the spatial organization of the pastoral economy for the immigrants' settlement in Kaoko and their integration into the local society figure prominently in oral histories, such as those from Kaoko Otavi, where the new arrivals and their herds were given the right to settle at nearby cattle posts claimed by the local headman Tjongoha.¹⁵⁸ A series of transactions of stock and mutual support based on tenure and labour bonds would gradually renew and reinforce the

¹⁵⁴ Werner (1998), p. 56; Drechsler (1985), p. 238.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002, interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002. Bollig confirms that people crossed the Kunene into Kaoko in small groups, see Bollig (1997), p. 20.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002, interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002.

¹⁵⁷ Bollig (1997), p. 20. This narrative of ancestral land was less relevant in oral histories from central and southern Kaoko recorded in 2001 and 2002.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002, interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002.

social relations between the local community and the new arrivals, and would legitimise the latter's residence in the area.¹⁵⁹

Beyond the obligations resulting from kinship and social affiliation, local leaders in Kaoko apparently had an interest in bringing the immigrants under their control, and the example of Kakurukouje again figures prominently in oral narratives from the region. As we saw, the economic recovery that took place during the period had been supported by the decentralization of people and herds and their high mobility, allowing for rapid adaptation to raids and to unfavourable climatic conditions between 1910 and 1914. While a minority of people, mostly men, managed to rebuild herds of small and large stock and emerge as influential figures in terms of their wealth and social status, political leadership had become increasingly contested and stratified. Hence, the immigration of people from Angola, who in part possessed substantial herds, created new options and interests for men such as Kakurukouje to renew and reinforce claims to political power.¹⁶⁰ Kakurukouje is said to have contacted people in southern Angola and to have motivated them to return to Kaoko and settle there under his leadership.¹⁶¹ In many oral narratives from the region, the headman's political strategy and skilled anticipation (and hence orchestration) of immigrations to Kaoko is symbolized by his gun,¹⁶² used to convince the Angolan exiles that the raiding economy in the north-west, initiated by the Oorlam commandos, had finally come to an end.¹⁶³

Conditions changed when headmen Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom crossed the Kunene into Kaoko, although both had to negotiate their settlement south of the river with Kakurukouje.¹⁶⁴ The historiography on Kaoko has explained the two men's moving from Angola

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002, talking about the arrival of his grandfather George Hartley to the area of Kaoko Otavi and negotiating his family's residence. For corresponding processes in northern Kaoko see Kozongombe Tjingee in Bollig (1997), pp. 81–116.

¹⁶⁰ The few German travellers to Kaoko who met Kakurukouje or wrote about him, among them most prominently missionary Heinrich Vedder, could not assess the headman's role in the early 1910s in a proper way. Although they all acknowledged his economic strength, they deny Kakurukouje's political significance. NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, 1900–1914, *Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokoveld*, Vedder, H., „An Herrn Bezirksamtman von Zastrow“, Gaub, 1.9.1914; Kuntz (1913), pp. 436ff. In contrast missionary Trey remained more cautious in his judgement. ELCRN VI 27.13 & 27.14, *Jahresberichte, Quartalsberichte, Konferenzberichte der Missionsstation Outjo*, 1909–67, Trey an die Deputation, Bericht über die Reise der Missionare Vedder und Trey ins Kaokoveld, 7.12.1914.

¹⁶¹ Katjira Muniombara I and Kozongombe Tjingee in Bollig (1997), pp.33–78 & pp. 81–116. Interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe, 27.12.2001.

¹⁶² Kakurukouje's gun was named „ombandurururwa“, see Bollig (1997), pp.33–78 & p. 21. Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002.

¹⁶³ Interview with Ngangurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002 and with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe, 27.12.2001.

¹⁶⁴ Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p. 38; Kozongombe Tjingee in Bollig (1997), pp. 81–116.

with their increased enmeshment with the Portuguese colonial authorities.¹⁶⁵ With the establishment of a civil administration in 1910, and when raids and military expeditions by the Portuguese ended, former African mercenaries such as Tom and Katiti lost substantial sources of their power.¹⁶⁶ But, the change of colonial regimes in Namibia raised expectations for a new beginning in the southern colony.¹⁶⁷ Eventually, when Katiti and Tom came under serious pressure due to charges against them concerning theft and alleged murder, their interests were redirected towards a future existence south of the Kunene.¹⁶⁸ In contrast, oral information gives much less prominence to the colonial context of Katiti's and Tom's migration, rather contextualizing them in the broader history of people crossing the Kunene River described above. The issue at stake is more the question of scale and the social organization of the groups led by Katiti and Tom. In fact, in contrast to earlier immigrants, these groups possessed huge cattle herds and were familiar with modern insignia and technologies of war, such as horses, uniforms and guns.¹⁶⁹ Consequently, their arrival in Kaoko would not have allowed for integration into the local society without causing conflict.

The date of Muhona Katiti's settlement in Kaoko remains contested and speculation varies between 1910 and 1912.¹⁷⁰ He and his followers had managed to acquire significant wealth in livestock, in particular they kept arms and ammunition, which had been obtained during their military services in Angola. Yet, the early phase of their settlement in northern Kaoko, along the Omuhonga River, seems to have proceeded without causing disturbances.¹⁷¹ The community apparently managed to insert itself into the local socio-political landscape, basing its subsistence on the stock economy, the cultivation of gardens along the Kunene and on their continued trade relations with Boer and Portuguese traders

¹⁶⁵ Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p. 39; NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Administration”.

¹⁶⁶ Green (1952), p. 76; NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Administration”.

¹⁶⁷ Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p.37.

¹⁶⁸ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Administration”.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Ngangurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002, interview with Salomon Hartley, 11.1.2002; Katjira Muniombara I in Bollig (1997), pp. 33–78.

¹⁷⁰ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Administration”; Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p.43; Katjira Muniombara I in Bollig (1997), pp. 33–78.

¹⁷¹ Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p. 43; interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002.

in southern Angola.¹⁷² Tom immigrated around 1915¹⁷³ bringing with him a large group of at least 200 people,¹⁷⁴ substantial herds of livestock and numerous horses. After short stays at various places in northern Kaoko, Tom and his followers moved to Otjijandjasemo, where their migration eventually came to a halt.¹⁷⁵ Oral information underlines the prosperity of life in the area with the natural springs allowing for rich and extensive gardens, huge herds of small and large stock and the proximity to a powerful leader which guaranteed the supply with trade and luxury goods such as clothes and liquor.¹⁷⁶

But, in contrast to earlier arrivals, the presence of several men who harboured far-reaching political ambitions and who based their social status and power on resource scarcity and technologies of violence soon led to conflict and bitter fights.

3.3. Increasing violence – raiding and appropriation of resources

There is strong ambivalence and tension regarding the significance and function given to Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom in the historiography on Kaoko. These men all figured prominently in the colonial archives and have been conceived of as the main actors in the political landscape of the region, increasingly so, when South Africa took over colonial rule in north-western Namibia. As we shall see, the colonial administration relied greatly on Kakurukouje, Katiti and Tom under the policy of indirect rule in Kaoko, yet the South Africans would not hesitate to curtail the men's rights and influence as soon as they lost strategic interest in them. The prominence of the headmen is accordingly acknowledged in oral historiographies from the region, although narratives remain far more ambivalent compared to the colonial perspective. The tensions associated with Kakurukouje, Katiti and Tom concern the experiences of violence and of social instability associated with the early period of their residence in Kaoko, and women in particular render very critical accounts of the role these men played in Kaoko's past. Oral information does, however, blur the colonial bias of African leaders being notorious fighters, causing constant conflict and friction, and lacking any feeling of political responsibility.¹⁷⁷ In contrast, they open up nuanced

¹⁷² NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Administration”; Katjira Muniombara I in Bollig (1997), pp. 33–78.

¹⁷³ The exact year remains unclear, see Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p.42; NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Administration”.

¹⁷⁴ Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p. 43. His estimation is based on the Manning report of 1917.

¹⁷⁵ Kazongombe Tjingee in Bollig (1997), pp. 81–116; Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p. 43.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Mariri Koviti Tjihurua, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Kainaa Menjengua Tjihero, Kaoko Otavi, 8.1.2002.

¹⁷⁷ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Admin-

perspectives on the complexities of political rivalry as well as on processes of negotiation, of conflict resolution and social stabilization. Hence, rather than reconstructing the genesis of three powerful men and reinforcing their predominance as historical agents and thereby reproducing a history focused on big men, their deeds and achievements, we shall concern ourselves with the specific constellations emerging in Kaoko in the mid-1910s. We examine the ways in which political and economic power articulated itself and the African communities' response to increasing threats to social order and stability.

3.3.1 Conflicts among the male elite – entangled cattle cases

As we saw earlier, major Manning's handling of the rivalry between Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom in 1917 consisted of the colonial officer's assumption that the two men were unnecessarily perpetuating old disputes of limited relevance. His interpretation reflected the arrogance of a colonial representative focusing on his own strategic interest, which was to bring Kaoko and its population under control as soon as possible. But at the same time, Manning was overstrained by the nature and complexity of the quarrels and lacked the knowledge to evaluate the disputes in terms of their socio-political meaning. He neither comprehended what was at stake for the men involved, nor did he perceive that the pastoral economy, i.e. the circulation of stock and, by association, the organization of labour and the control of resources, was the vehicle through which the headmen negotiated and at times violently sorted out power constellations among themselves.

The immigration of Katiti and Tom into Kaoko went hand in hand with the transfer of an expansionist economy based on the accumulation of stock through raiding.¹⁷⁸ Muhona Katiti and his people had used their proximity to the Kunene River strategically. They had negotiated the terms of a pastoral subsistence with Kakurukouje,¹⁷⁹ whilst simultaneously continuing raids into southern Angola.¹⁸⁰ The violent incursions to the north did not remain unanswered and confrontations with rival Boer and Portuguese hunters and traders came to a head.¹⁸¹ When Tom and his followers moved into the area too, the situation grew tense

istration”.

¹⁷⁸ NAN SWAA 2379 A 158/4/3, Kaokoveld Native Unrest 1916–48, C. Schlettwein to mil. mag. Outjo, 26.11.1916; NAN OCT 17 Z I, Native unrest Zessfontein etc., Report by lt. van Wijk on ‘native unrest’, 6.11.1916.

¹⁷⁹ Kozongombe Tjingee in Bollig (1997), pp. 81–116; interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, On-jette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002.

¹⁸⁰ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, p. 55; NAN SWAA 2379 A 158/4/3, Kaokoveld Native Unrest, 1916–48, Notes on Interview between col. de Jager, major J.F. Herbst, lt. Becklen, with the native headman Oorlog, his younger brother and one of Oorlog's sons, at the office of the off. Commanding troop, Gov. buildings, Windhoek, 6.6.1917; Katjira Muniombara I in Bollig (1997), pp. 33–78.

¹⁸¹ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, p. 54.

as the three men had to negotiate their spheres of influence within a comparatively narrow geographic space, with the focus at first in northern Kaoko.¹⁸²

These processes of negotiation proved to be complex.¹⁸³ Neither the immediate assessments by the representatives of the South African administration, nor later historiography on Kaoko, could establish how the strategies chosen were determined by the ways in which local society had responded to the dramatic shift in the socio-political landscape.¹⁸⁴ The need to increase stock herds and enforce claims to political power led to the gradual spread of raiding throughout Kaoko.¹⁸⁵ Archival, as well as oral information repeatedly refers to the increase in cattle thefts, first in the northern parts of the region and soon spreading southwards.¹⁸⁶ The raiding economy placed a strain on the affected households and villages, in particular because the thefts ignored rules of social order and non-repudiability.¹⁸⁷ Groups raided neighbours or other groups to which they were linked through maternal kinship ties.¹⁸⁸ The violation of these bonds is a telling indication of the deep impact the raids had on the local society. As we shall see, the violent incursions only came to a halt in southern Kaoko, where the Sesfontein leadership managed to mobilize people against the threats to their lives.

Although the repeated experience of economic and social insecurity caused by the raiding immigrants dominates oral histories that refer to the mid-1910s, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom's establishment within the local society required peaceful strategies as well, especially with regard to the aim of enforcing their political claims. While still in southern Angola, Tom had proven skilful in creating loyalties through incorporating people into the pastoral economy as herders and raiders or through intermarriage, orchestrating his own and his subjects' social obligations and rights.¹⁸⁹ In Kaoko, both men managed to bring

¹⁸² Katjira Muniombara I in Bollig (1997), pp. 33–78.

¹⁸³ Kozongombe Tjingee and Katjira Muniombara both extensively recount the complexity of negotiating cattle thefts. Bollig (1997), pp. 33–78 & 81–116.

¹⁸⁴ E.g. Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999). Surprisingly Bollig states in his introduction to the edited interviews from northern Kaoko, that the re-immigration to Kaoko is hardly remembered, Bollig (1997), p. 20.

¹⁸⁵ NAN OCT 17 Z I, Native Unrest Zessfontein etc., telegram by mil. pol. Outjo to Windhoek, 1.11.1916 and telegram by mil. pol. Outjo to Windhoek, 28.12.1916.

¹⁸⁶ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaakoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917; NAN SWAA A 518/4/3, Military Magistrate Outjo to the Secretary for the Protectorate, 31.10.1916; interview with Matthäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe, 27.12.2001, interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002; Engombe Kapeke in Bollig (1997), pp. 171–203.

¹⁸⁷ Patricia Hayes has described similar processes for Owambo in the mid 1910s, Hayes (1992), pp. 201–207.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Maririro Koviti Tjihurua, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Ngangurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002.

¹⁸⁹ Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p. 23.

formerly independent households and groups under their protection and control.¹⁹⁰ Their wealth in stock and access to trading goods furthered their interest in building up a regional network of alliances.¹⁹¹ These strategies of social integration and cohesion linked both men to their local counterpart Kakurukouje, with whom Tom and Katiti maintained mutual relationships of exchange, claims and cooperation.¹⁹²

Nevertheless, Kaoko's natural, economic and human resources placed limits on the disruptive nature of the raids and the territorial and political claims among the rivals. Confrontations caused by mutual disregard for property rights, rights to pastures and water resources¹⁹³ as well as threats to people's lives had to be cushioned anew through negotiations of inclusive terms of coexistence. As we saw, when Manning arrived in Kaoko for the first time in 1917, Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom were involved in an almost unmanageable mesh of disputes over cattle and property. While the South African officer read the entangled cases in terms of an almost genuine litigiousness of the three leaders, these reflected precisely the complexity of the entanglement among the men, which went far beyond material interests.¹⁹⁴ In the realm of the pastoral economy, the overlapping of various systems, i.e. subsistence, commercial trade and social reproduction, was concurrently the most elaborate and the most contested, particularly when structural conditions changed. The unfavourable colonial constellations in southern Angola, which eventually led to significant dislocation of people and herds culminating in the immigrations into Kaoko, where the emergence of a new society had to be negotiated, created a situation in which the balance between economic production and social welfare was disrupted. As we shall see, responses to the immigrants and to the spread of the raiding economy aimed at both countering and absorbing the changes that were underway.

3.4. Responses by the local communities

The responses to the immigrations from southern Angola and to the increased raiding in Kaoko in the mid-1910s were multiple and reflected the complex nature of strategies cho-

¹⁹⁰ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, p. 10.

¹⁹¹ Interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002; NAN SWAA 2516, Extract from Diary of Major Manning (Res. Commissioner Ovamboland) during period of duty in Kaokoveld, p. 18. Also see Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p. 42.

¹⁹² Katjira Muniombara I in Bollig (1997), pp. 33–78; NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, p. 20; NAN SWAA 2516, Extract from Diary of Major Manning (Res. Commissioner Ovamboland) during period of duty in Kaokoveld, pp. 46–48; interview with Ngangurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 15.5.2002.

¹⁹³ The Omuhonga River and its tributaries in northern Kaoko e.g. was an area contested between Katiti and Tom in the very beginning, see NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, p. 17.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Ngangurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002.

sen by the immigrants in the process of establishing themselves in the north-western region. The scanty archival sources from the early period of South African military presence do allow us to grasp some elements of the ways in which the local African community coped with shifting socio-economic conditions. The change of colonial regime had hampered most of the exploratory work done by the representatives of the Rhenish Mission Society until 1914, when missionaries Vedder and Trey had ventured into Kaoko. By 1920, the mission was no longer allowed into the area and could not report on developments taking place north of Outjo.¹⁹⁵ Ways in which the local society managed to absorb and integrate the new arrivals and transform Kaoko's socio-political landscape is made clear through oral information.

3.4.1. Dislocation and new loyalties

In late 1916 C. Schlettwein, the representative of the Kaoko Land and Mining Company based at Otjitambi in southern Kaoko, reported to the military police in Outjo that cattle thefts were taking place on a daily base in the region, affecting African stock owners as well as European settlers.¹⁹⁶ In his letter Schlettwein suspected the destination of stock, which had been driven away, to be northern Kaoko, where the thieves could realize the profits of their disruptive activities undisturbed by the colonial administration and police. While the Boer and German farmers in the Outjo district urged the few military forces stationed in the north-western part of the colony to recover their lost property,¹⁹⁷ African pastoralists chose other strategies in response to the increased raiding in the area. The mobility of people and stock became crucial once again, and the raiding economy of the mid-1910s caused the dislocation of many families and entire households, which moved towards the western and southern outskirts of Kaoko in order to protect their herds.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, the military magistrate in Outjo had noticed the increased presence of scattered families and small groups moving towards the Etosha pan area, occupying springs such as those at Otjivazandu and

¹⁹⁵ ELCRN V 27, Gemeinde-Chronik der Missionsstation Outjo, D.S.W. Afrika, 1904–1967; and RMG 2.524 a C7h 39 a, Outjo (mit Franzfontein und Zesfontein), Band 1, 1906–1922, Trey, Konferenzbericht Outjo, 1913–20, n.d.

¹⁹⁶ NAN SWAA 2379 A 158/4/3, Kaokoveld Native Unrest, 1916–48, C. Schlettwein to the military magistrate Outjo, 26.11.1916.

¹⁹⁷ In 1916 there were six policemen at Cauas Okawa in southern Kaoko, three policemen at Fransfontein and 10 policemen at Okaukuejo, on the south-western margin of the Etosha pan. NAN OCT 17 Z I, native unrest Zessfontein etc., Military police to Windhoek, 2.11.1916. Zessfontein police post had been abandoned in late 1914, see LAN 644 1640, Zessfontein Outjo Native Reserve 1917–1923, Manning to acting Secretary, 24.4.1921.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002, interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe, 27.12.2001.

Kaross.¹⁹⁹ Likewise, Schlettwein had been asked by African herders to be allowed to move their animals into the vicinity of his farm Otjitambi, and he suspected these migrations to be an immediate result of increased pressure on people caused by raiders.²⁰⁰ South-western Kaoko became another destination for people trying to avoid threats to social and economic security for various reasons. The rivers and springs in the area around Sesfontein guaranteed the survival of herds, the more so when rainfalls held off in 1915/16 and limited the availability of water and pastures.²⁰¹ Sesfontein became a significant site of refuge²⁰² and of alliance against the incursions of the raiders, especially by Vita Tom's people who were gradually expanding towards the south. In 1916 Kakurukouje was said to have asked the Sesfontein *kaptein* Levi Uixamab to support him against Tom's and Katiti's misdemeanours and, while the South African authorities judged an alliance between the Sesfontein Topnaar and Kakurukouje's "Owatjimba" to be most improbable,²⁰³ delegations moving between the two places and exchanging gifts in stock witnessed the dynamics of political alliance against intruding rivals.²⁰⁴ Kakurukouje had not been the only one trying to curtail the ambitions of his rivals. Several independent heads of households in northern and central Kaoko, e.g. in Okorosave and Kaoko Otavi²⁰⁵ made attempts to dodge Tom's and Katiti's claims to authority. But what decisively put a limit to the spread of raiding into southern Kaoko was the Sesfontein leadership²⁰⁶ managing to hold off the northern intrusions up until 1917, when Manning's arrival would again change the parameters of political manoeuvre.

¹⁹⁹ NAN SWAA 2379 A 158/4/3, Kaokoveld Native Unrest, 1916–48, Lt. Van Wijk, Confidential: Report on Investigation native unrest Kaokoveld, 29.11.1916.

²⁰⁰ Namely by ,Herero Katane with 10 men and families moving to Erowa', and by 'Owatjimba Kaperowango and Keiunde, asking to be allowed to move to Numas with their families and herds'. NAN SWAA 2379 A 158/4/3, Kaokoveld Native Unrest, 1916–48, C. Schlettwein to military magistrate Outjo, 26.11.1916.

²⁰¹ Interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe, 27.12.2001 and August Kasaona, Otjindagwe, 20.12.2001.

²⁰² Interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe, 27.12.2001 and August Kasaona, Otjindagwe, 20.12.2001.

²⁰³ NAN SWAA 2379 A 158/4/3, Kaokoveld Native Unrest, 1916–48, Mil. mag. Outjo to secretary for the protectorate, 31.10.1916 and Lt. Van Wijk, Confidential: Report on Investigation native unrest Kaokoveld, 29.11.1916.

²⁰⁴ NAN SWAA 2379 A 158/4/3, Kaokoveld Native Unrest, 1916–48, Mil. mag. Outjo to secretary for the protectorate, 31.10.1916 and Lt. Van Wijk, Confidential: Report on Investigation native unrest Kaokoveld, 29.11.1916, interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe, 27.12.2001.

²⁰⁵ OCT 17 Z I Native unrest Zessfontein etc., Brodtkorb to col. de Jager, 30.3.1917; interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002.

²⁰⁶ Interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001 and with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe, 27.12.2001. The police post in Cauas Okawa might have had a dissuasive effect on the raiders, but there is not a single intervention by the South African police against stock thieves mentioned in the archival documents from the period.

3.4.2. *Claiming property, negotiating theft and violence*

The cases concerning cattle thefts, which dominate the early South African reports in 1916 and 1917, consider mutual allegations between Muhona Katiti or his close relatives, and Vita Tom.²⁰⁷ Yet, some instances of independent heads of households reporting murders or thefts of small and large stock and accusing one or the other headman as responsible do crop up.²⁰⁸ Only a minority of disputes over stock property came to the attention of the South African administration; claiming back animals, which had been driven away or stolen, was an option for pastoralists in Kaoko. Women in particular had to use strategies of dispute negotiation to enforce their claims and the raids led to an increase in legal disputes lasting for decades.²⁰⁹

As suggested before, the raiding economy did not entirely determine the circulation of stock, and there were limits to the violent appropriation of cattle. While raids were important as an economic strategy to men such as Kakurukouje, Katiti and Tom, enabling them to increase their herds quickly and substantially, their claim to economic and political rule required the control of raiding activities in the region.²¹⁰ The raiding economy became the arena which, although providing the headmen with wealth, constantly threatened to undermine their claim to law-making power.²¹¹ Their jurisdiction in disputes over stolen stock, which had been appropriated by their subjects, needed careful consideration and would, at times, privilege socio-political stability over the economic advancement of their own people.²¹² Oral information recounts situations in which Tom or Katiti forced their subjects to return stock to the damaged parties and, additionally, required the thieves to pay cattle fines.

²⁰⁷ Manning gives a detailed account of the various allegations, see NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Administration”.

²⁰⁸ NAN OCT 17 Z I native unrest Zessfontein etc., Telegram by the military police Outjo to Windhoek, 1.11.1916, referring to raids in the Ongongo area, and Telegram from Outjo to Windhoek, 28.12.1916, re raids in the Kaoko Otavi area.

²⁰⁹ Interview with Mariro Koviti Tjihurua, Koako Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Uetjipuraije Hi-atjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002. For similar developments in Owambo see Hayes (1992), p. 204.

²¹⁰ Katjira Muniombara recounts concerns of Muhona Katiti with uncontrolled cattle raiding by his people. See Katjira Muniombara I in Bollig (1997), pp. 33–78.

²¹¹ Interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe, 27.12.2001, interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001.

²¹² Manning does refer to cases of disputes over cattle between Vita Tom's and Muhona Katiti's people, where he implicitly suggests that things could be settled peacefully. NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Administration”.

3.4.3. *Strategies of social integration and assimilation*

The expansion of the immigrants from Angola under the leadership of Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom was not always disruptive; processes of social integration and assimilation into local communities did occur. Otjijandjasemo, Vita Tom's headquarters, had become, as we saw, a place which attracted many people for various reasons not least because the political leaders had gradually occupied the best sites in terms of water and pasture. Furthermore, in a situation of increased social and economic insecurity and disturbance, proximity to one of the centres of power was advantageous. Subsistence was secured²¹³ and the headmen guaranteed people's safety as well as the safety of their animals.²¹⁴ The South African military administration rightly suspected formerly scattered groups were joining either Muhona Katiti or Vita Tom preferring to live under the headmen's protection rather than cooperating with the colonial officers.²¹⁵ In order to bring people under their political influence, Kakurukouje, Katiti and Tom could all rely on their wealth in stock. Cattle loans supported their aim to create and enforce loyalties particularly among younger men who might have ambitions to separate and establish themselves as independent pastoralists.²¹⁶ This option was much less accessible to women, who were affected by the political power plays and the raiding economy in specific ways. While dependent agricultural and pastoral work had to be delivered to the headmen by men, women and children alike,²¹⁷ women became particularly vulnerable as victims of deportations.²¹⁸ Vita Tom is said to have married women from various communities and oral information remains highly ambivalent with regard to the nature of some of his respective bonding.²¹⁹ Marrying into the headmen's family became a strategy some women opted for, specifically because it would guarantee access to economic and social resources.²²⁰

²¹³ McKittrick makes a similar point for Owambo in the mid 1910s, see McKittrick (2002), p. 148.

²¹⁴ Interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002.

²¹⁵ NAN SWAA 2379 A 158/4/3, Kaokoveld Native Unrest, 1916–48, lt. Van Wijk, Confidential: Report on investigation native unrest Kaokoveld, 29.11.1916, stating literally that people left and 'joined the other mob'.

²¹⁶ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Administration", where e.g. Muhona Katiti's brother Karuwapa is said to have left with some followers and herds to cross into Angola.

²¹⁷ Interview with Maririro Koviti Tjihurua, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Kainaa Menjengua Tjihero, Kaoko Otavi, 8.1.2002. Louda Hawaxas described similar conditions in Sesfontein, interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001.

²¹⁸ Interview with Maririro Koviti Tjihurua, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Kainaa Menjengua Tjihero, Kaoko Otavi, 8.1.2002.

²¹⁹ Interview with Maririro Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002. Stals and Otto mention Tom's strategy of strategic marriage, but do not discuss the question of women being forced into these relations. Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), p. 27.

²²⁰ Patricia Hayes makes a similar point for women in Owambo, Hayes (1992), p. 204; interview

But what did allow for the social integration of local groups into the new society emerging in the mid-1910s in particular was the active role played by evangelists, who were members of the various independent African churches.²²¹ Manning had met local evangelists who had managed to establish quite autonomous households and who taught people reading and writing and enabled them to access trading goods, such as clothes.²²² Oral information also reveals the important role these men played in the period, as they offered alternative spaces of social order and stability,²²³ which appear to have been less vulnerable to the disruptive processes caused by the political rivalries among the local elite and their supporters.

As we saw, the immigrations from southern Angola to Kaoko in the early 1910s significantly transformed the socio-political landscape of the region. While the raiding economy and the political power play between Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom figure prominently both in the colonial archives as well as in oral traditions from the region, local communities engaged in multiple strategies to negotiate, counter and, at times, resist the threats and pressures they experienced. While the immigrations no doubt hampered the processes of repastoralization taking place within Kaoko since 1907, they did bring about changes in the local pastoral economy and society, which forged new forms of alliance and allowed for strategies of social integration. The dynamics changed significantly, as we shall see, when the South African administration decided to intervene in the region militarily and reframed the conditions under which claims to power would be articulated and enforced.

4. Colonial administration and the constitution of political leadership

4.1. Introduction

On the 24th December 1919, four months after handing in the report on his second tour to Kaoko, major Manning contentedly reported to the secretary for the protectorate, that his two interventions in the north-western area had finally begun to prove successful, and that

with Kainaa Menjengua Tjihero, Kaoko Otavi, 8.1.2002, interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002.

²²¹ Most of these evangelists had been trained within the Rhenish Mission Society in central Namibia and had moved to southern Angola after the colonial war of 1904–1907 and moved into Kaoko from the early 1910s onwards. See Kuvare, S. (1977), *Die Kaokoveld-Herero*. In Sundermaier, Th. (ed.), *Die Mbanderu. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur*. St. Augustin, p. 197.

²²² NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917. See McKittrick for evangelists' particular role during drought and famine in Owambo, McKittrick (2002), pp. 139–140.

²²³ Interview with Maririro Koviti Tjihurua, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Kainaa Menjengua Tjihero, Kaoko Otavi, 8.1.2002.

the central issues of colonial interest, i.e. the disarmament of people and the provisions regarding so called “tribal affairs” allowing for an undisturbed administration had been attended to satisfactorily. In an alleged modest way he could conclude that

Members of these tribes have visited me unofficially at Ondonga and appear to appreciate the commencement of more settled peaceful conditions in their history²²⁴

The disjuncture between the resident commissioner’s representation and the reality of how the situation in Kaoko would unfold could not have been greater. In a few years to come, the South African administration would soon have to admit that conditions in the north-west displayed the complexities and diversities of a society emerging on the colonial periphery and, as such, continued to challenge any idea of a “settled” and “peaceful” state in terms of an administration in line with the policies the new colonial government would try to enforce.

Disputes and litigation between Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom continued, and the three men appeared to privilege their own economic wellbeing and political empowerment rather than establishing social control and order. The question of territorial claims was not settled, nor could the commissioner determine the logic of the headmen’s movements and residence within the region.²²⁵ Uncontrolled mobility of people and stock remained beyond the administration’s grasp, and the limited police presence stationed in the south of the region was hopelessly overstrained by their duties.²²⁶ Although Manning had put enormous energy into disarming Kaoko’s population, arms continued to circulate and supplies from Owambo and Angola appeared to carry on unfettered.²²⁷ The administration was perfectly aware of the fact that continuing the trade in arms and ammunition favoured both raiding within and beyond Kaoko and the lucrative business with game.²²⁸ So-called illicit hunting and trading was particularly problematic as it linked Africans in the region with European adventurers and traders. If anything, the presence of Europeans in the north-western region was more than unsettling to the colonial officers, and it took

²²⁴ NAN RCO 8 9 – General Reports, Manning to the Secretary for the Protectorate, 2.12.1919.

²²⁵ NAN SWAA 2516, report by Major Manning Major Manning re 2nd Tour Kaokoveld; Disarmament; General, 25.8.1919, p. 6 & p. 34.

²²⁶ NAN SWAA 937 A 82/20, Police Post Outjo, Military Constable to Secretary for the Protectorate, 10.12.1919.

²²⁷ NAN SWAA 2516, Major Manning’s report, Military Magistrate Outjo to the Secretary for the Protectorate, 25.3.1919 and Report by Major Eadie, 20.3.1919; NAN A 450 10 3/5/1, Kaokoveld 1917–45, Manning to the Secretary, 4.10.1921. Interviewees repeatedly said, that people hid arms in caves in order to prevent the South African officers from confiscating them; e.g. interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Kuairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002.

²²⁸ NAN SWAA 2516, report by Major Manning re 2nd Tour Kaokoveld; Disarmament; General, 25.8.1919, p. 38.

the administration some time to come to terms with the number and location of farms that had been sold to Europeans under German colonial rule.²²⁹ The further south, the more encroached and confusing things appeared. And while African pastoralists and European settlers seemed to cooperate in lucrative business with stock, game and alcohol, and farmers in the Outjo district regularly drove their stock into the region for grazing, the relationships remained marked by rivalries and conflicts which cropped up continuously.²³⁰

As mentioned before, the granting of the Mandate over Namibia to South Africa in January 1921 by the League of Nations changed the parameters of colonial policies, which would now increasingly allow for enforcing interests and requirements of the settler economy.²³¹ The historiography has referred to the colonial tightening up in the early 1920s, which would privilege European settlers to the disadvantage of the African population. Although the territory had entered the post-war recession by 1922, and despite the heavy droughts colonial Namibia experienced until 1924, the South African administration imperturbably sped up its land settlement programme.²³² Extended financial and infrastructural aid was employed in order to support the desired number of South African farmers into the colony.²³³ Linked to the necessity of making land accessible to settlers, the administration initiated a process of establishing long-awaited reserves for the African population. The scattered African pastoral communities living in temporary reserves or squatting on crown land or on European-owned farms had proven to be a serious challenge to the colonial state in terms of control in view of the requirement of the colonial economy for an African labour force.²³⁴ Consolidation of reserves and new legislation intended to exert some control over African mobility and economy, including pass laws, the Masters and Servants Act and a dog tax, which were meant to facilitate colonial control, standardize administrative procedures and, not least, ensure the required flow of a labour force into the colonial economy.²³⁵ For these reasons, in 1921 a commission was sent to survey the *status quo* and to make recommendations to the administration concerning the location and size of the future reserves.²³⁶ While within the Police Zone, i.e. in southern and central Namibia, the establishment of the new reserves was decisively shaped by the advancing land dispossession of the African commu-

²²⁹ See the files in NAN LAN 644 1640, Zessfontein Outjo Native Reserve, 1917–23, which holds the correspondence between farmers and the administration concerning farms in Kaoko.

²³⁰ NAN A 450 10 3/5/1, Kaokoveld 1917–45, Manning to the Secretary, 28.10.1921 and Secretary to the magistrate Outjo, 13.10.1921.

²³¹ Emmett (1999), p. 89; Werner (1998), p. 85.

²³² Emmett (1999), pp. 90 & 93.

²³³ Werner (1998), p. 80.

²³⁴ Silvester et al (1998), pp. 18–19.

²³⁵ Emmett (1999), pp. 92 & 100.

²³⁶ South West Africa (1921). *Report of the Native Reserves Commission*. Windhoek.

nities, the process took a different form in the northern areas, where European settlement was much less an issue. A system of so-called “tribal administration”, with central Owambo being generally regarded as the ideal type, would gradually be established.²³⁷ As we shall see, in Kaoko these administrative plans would soon prove to be more than problematic, and would extend over several years, due to the lack of colonial personnel in the region, the remoteness of the area lying beyond the mainland of the colony and, not least, because of the local communities undermining the South African idea of an unproblematic colonial reserve.

4.2. Indirect rule – building up political counterparts in the region

The South African policy in the northern areas was based on indirect rule; i.e. it needed to identify local partners, kings or headmen, in cooperation with whom the resident commissioner could attend to daily administration.²³⁸ The dynamics and variations concerning political leadership turned out to be decisive for the ways in which indirect rule articulated itself.²³⁹ While the centralized polities of Kwanyama and Ondonga seemingly offered ideal conditions, the case of Mandume had shown how far the South African administration would go in order to curtail the power of leaders considered to be too influential. In Kaoko, the administration faced a situation comparable to the one in the decentralized societies of western Owambo, where political leadership was much more contested and rivalries between various headmen hindered the emergence of stable political hierarchies.²⁴⁰ But what specifically complicated the situation in the north-west was that two of the candidates for future political activity favoured by Manning, Vita Tom and Muhona Katiti, were locally considered to be immigrants. Consequently, their claims to territorial control were contested and the legitimacy of their socio-political status was ambiguous.

Manning’s first aim was to resolve the power play between the three potential headmen in Kaoko and, as we have already seen, his strategy had been one of downplaying disputes and convincing Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom that submission under South African rule would be to their benefit as much as to the benefit of the colonial administration. Nevertheless, from 1917 onwards Manning created and continuously reinforced a hierarchy among the men, privileging Tom as the most able and influential figure, while casting Kakurukouje and Katiti as minor headmen eventually reliable under Tom’s influ-

²³⁷ Werner (1998), p. 107.

²³⁸ Werner (1998), p. 106.

²³⁹ Silvester et al (1998), p. 16.

²⁴⁰ See Part II, chapter 1.2..

ence and ruling.²⁴¹ As we shall see, the predominance of Tom and the disadvantaging of his two regional counterparts would hold sway far into the 1920s.

The administration had to ensure that the headmen would be able to fulfil their duties and that control over their subjects would be effective. The exercise of power would rest on a repertoire of means and procedures, beginning with the headmen's monopoly on arms. While the general disarmament was applied to most people indiscriminately, the ownership of arms and ammunition by headmen was dealt with separately. Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom were allowed to keep a number of rifles, officially legitimized by the necessity and responsibility these men had to protect people and herds against predators.²⁴² On the other hand, the administration required their continued supervision of arms circulation in the region and to confiscate guns or report illegal ownership to the colonial authorities.²⁴³ The expectations raised by the colonial officers and the policies applied by Kakurukouje, Katiti and Tom soon led to conditions open to abuse, in which access to and ownership of arms became a question of arbitrary decisions taken by the headmen, depending on situational requirements and personal interests.²⁴⁴ This became apparent when interventions allegedly aimed at disarming people unexpectedly turned into raids and eventually reanimated frictions between the headmen involved.²⁴⁵

From the very beginning of its establishment as the new colonial power, the South African administration in Namibia had faced problems concerning jurisdiction. The implementation of legislative structures in line with those of the Union proved tricky,²⁴⁶ particularly in the northern reserves, where the colonial state had to rely on local leaders to handle their claims to jurisdiction.²⁴⁷ While indirect rule implied a non-interventionist practice, the question of how to deal with severe offences, such as raiding and murder, remained an issue of debate. Indeed, the magistrates in the northern areas supported the general reservation, yet they strongly advocated intervention by the colonial bodies against stock theft and murder,

²⁴¹ NAN ADM 156 W 32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major Manning, 1917, „Oorlog and Muhona Katiti: History of and Dispute between the Chieftains: Action taken by the South African Administration”.

²⁴² NAN SWAA 2516 Report by Major C.N. Manning re 2nd Tour Kaokoveld; Disarmament; General, 25.8.1919, p. 34.

²⁴³ NAN SWAA 2516 Report by Major C.N. Manning re 2nd Tour Kaokoveld; Disarmament; General, 25.8.1919, pp. 4 & 5.

²⁴⁴ Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002, interview with Kuairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002.

²⁴⁵ NAN SWAA 2516, Report by Major C.N. Manning re 2nd Tour Kaokoveld, Report by Major Eadie, 20.3.1919.

²⁴⁶ Emmett (1999), p. 92.

²⁴⁷ Hayes (1992), pp. 240ff.

in accordance with the modes of action within the Police Zone.²⁴⁸ In Kaoko, the ambivalence and strategic concerns determining the application of colonial law soon became apparent.²⁴⁹ As we have seen, as soon as Manning and his men entered Kaoko, the South African representatives had been confronted with charges raised by African pastoralists against the three headmen, attempting to reclaim property and resisting threats to their lives and livelihoods. These cases continued into the early 1920s and, in the context of buttressing the future leaders and partners to the administration, the handling of situations in which people demanded back their stock was now subordinated to political goals. Indeed, several charges of stock thefts by individual claimants raised at the magistrate's office in 1923 were downplayed and left to the jurisdiction of Tom and Katiti, although the two men had been among the accused.²⁵⁰ The administration's strategy was problematic in legal terms but successful in terms of weakening the population's rights and claims to justice in favour of strong and unchallenged political partners in the region.

The main sphere of action where the headmen would increasingly try to push through their claim to power was the control over the mobility of people and animals, and therewith, the access to land and water resources. Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom became the subsidiaries to the administration in trying to enforce pass laws, supervising the size and movement of herds and the pattern of temporary residence and migration.²⁵¹

Nevertheless, it had become obvious by 1919 that securing administration in Kaoko in accordance with the requirements of the colonial state necessitated the settling of territorial constellations, in order to determine which headman would eventually rule over which part of the region and where people were supposed to reside and move their herds. It was the establishment of the Native Reserves Commission and its recommendations for the north-western area that laid the groundwork for the establishment of a number of reserves inside Kaoko. Among the members of the commission was, not unexpectedly, major Manning.

²⁴⁸ Miescher (2009), p. 144.

²⁴⁹ The ambiguities of colonial law and judicial practice will be discussed in much more depth in Part IV below.

²⁵⁰ It is worth noting, that the same procedures were applied when Africans claimed money or stock back from European farmers. For the cases referred to see NAN LOU 3/1/1, Magistrate Outjo, Kaokoveld affairs, Major Manning to Secretary for SWA, 30.4.1923, Major Manning to Secretary for SWA, 21.5.1923, and Hahn to Secretary for SWA, 2.5.1924.

²⁵¹ By 1919 and increasingly so through the 1920s the headmen would report people to the police station or to the magistrate in Outjo, hence using the colonial administration and the presence of South African police as an additional source of power in the control of their subjects. See NAN LOU 3/1/1, Magistrate Outjo, Kaokoveld affairs, Manning to the Secretary for SWA, 21.5.1923.

4.3. Separating people

The distribution of the African population in Kaoko had already come up as an issue in Manning's report of 1917 and from the very beginning it had been linked to an eventual use of Kaoko as an area for future European settlement. In his first report, the resident commissioner had initially opted for a simple solution. He had advocated the settlement of the entire Herero population in a reserve to be situated in northern Kaoko under Vita Tom's leadership.²⁵² In addition to this Herero reserve, the settlement of Sesfontein was meant to constitute the core land of a second reserve, to be inhabited by what Manning termed the "Hottentots".²⁵³ His recommendation concerning the southern Sesfontein reserve would soon prove to be contested. Indeed, in line with its general reserve policy, the administration was debating a solution that would allow for the removal of people from Sesfontein and Fransfontein into one consolidated reserve. These plans worried the missionary in Outjo, who noted in early 1921, that

although the local population stressed in their suggestions, that the Hottentots in Franzfontein and Zesfontein should be allowed to remain at their places of residence and that a reserve should only be given to natives living scattered at various springs, the commission explained that it was the administration's wish to move all natives in the district, including the Hottentots in Franzfontein and Zessfontein, to one reserve. Due to financial considerations it has been suggested that they establish a big reserve with the district of Otjiwarongo²⁵⁴

Eventually the plans to remove people from Sesfontein and Fransfontein were abandoned and the southern reserve, which had been granted to the Sesfontein leadership by the German colonial government, had to be accepted in line with the general recognition of the German treaties in the territory by the South African administration.²⁵⁵ Including a number of

²⁵² NAN SWAA 2516, report by Major Manning re 2nd Tour Kaokoveld; Disarmament; General, 25.8.1919, p. 61.

²⁵³ NAN SWAA 2516, report by Major Manning re 2nd Tour Kaokoveld; Disarmament; General, 25.8.1919, p. 61. The term 'Hottentott' was used to label Nama speaking communities in Namibia in the early 20th century.

²⁵⁴ RMG 2.524 a C/h 39 a, Outjo (mit Franzfontein und Zesfontein, Band 1, 1906–22, Trey, Halbjahresbericht vom 1.10.1920 bis 1.4.1921, Outjo, 5.4.1921. Translated from the German original „Obgleich die hiesige Bevölkerung in ihren Vorschlägen betonte, dass die Franzfonteiner und die Zessfonteiner Hottentotten an ihren Plätzen wohnen bleiben könnten und nur den an den verschiedenen Wasserstellen zerstreut sitzenden Eingeborenen ein Reservat angewiesen werden möge, erklärte die Kommission, es sei der Wunsch der Regierung, alle Eingeborenen des Bezirks, auch die Franzfonteiner und Zessfonteiner Hottentotten in ein Reservat unterzubringen. Aus Sparsamkeitsgründen sei es geboten, ein grosser Reservat vielleicht mit dem Otjiwarongoer Bezirk zusammen zu errichten“.

²⁵⁵ The grant of land made by the German government was eventually confirmed in Government Notice No. 122 of 1923. See van Warmelo (1951), p. 37.

groups in the area between Warmquelle, Sesfontein and surroundings, the southern reserve was classified as a Nama reserve, regardless of any cultural, linguistic or social diversity among the communities.²⁵⁶

By 1919 the original idea of a consolidated Herero reserve in northern Kaoko had also collapsed, partly because divisions between Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom had proven to be irresolvable. Consequently Manning's recommendations regarding the demarcation of so-called "tribal areas", which would eventually be accepted by the Native Reserves Commission, materialized as follows in 1921:

(1) Oorlog Hereros and Ovatsimba above junction of Omuhonga and Otjijanasemo dry rivers and neighbourhood in central northern Kaokoveld and also at Ongongo on Owaruthe River much further south although the latter was merely an alternative area.

(2) Muhona Katiti's Ovatsimbabas in Hondoto-Epembe area north-east Kaokoveld.

(3) Kasupi's Ovatsimbabas at Ombepera occupied for quite a century by his line in the otherwise uninhabited rocky mountains of northwest Kaokoveld".²⁵⁷

The total population in Kaoko was estimated at ca. 11'000 people in 1921²⁵⁸ and, while the distribution of the population within the three northern and the southern reserves remained far from being obvious, Manning supposed that Oorlog's, i.e. Vita Tom's area, would eventually include the strongest group in terms of number of people and stock.²⁵⁹ To further support his recommendations, Manning assured the commission that the three demarcated areas all fell outside those parts of Kaoko suitable for European settlement, the eastern and southern areas that offered strong springs and good grazing.²⁶⁰

4.3.1. Constructing ethnic groups for the reserves

While the demarcation of the four reserves was the first attempt by the South African administration to impose a fixed territoriality, and hence to anchor in space the political claims raised by the three headmen, the Native Reserves Commission constitutes the first systematic attempt to formalize a tribal or ethnic narrative, which had already informally

²⁵⁶ The forceful unification of groups within ethnically labelled reserves affected several cases all over colonial Namibia, see Silvester et al (1998), p. 11.

²⁵⁷ NAN A 450 10 3/5/1 Kaokoveld 1917–45, Manning, Re Kaokoveld Native Reserves, Windhoek, 15.7.1921, p. 3.

²⁵⁸ LOU 3/1/1 14/1/20, Population Censuses, 1920–23, Census, 1921, the exact number was 10'950 persons, including Sesfontein.

²⁵⁹ NAN A 450 10 3/5/1, Manning, Re Kaokoveld Native Reserves, Windhoek, 15.7.1921.

²⁶⁰ NAN A 450 10 3/5/1 Kaokoveld 1917–45, Manning, Re Kaokoveld Native Reserves, Windhoek, 15.7.1921, p. 3.

emerged in the early reports by travellers and explorers to the north-western area in the late 19th century. From the 1870s onwards throughout the German colonial period, the reports named the local population of Kaoko Ovatschimba,²⁶¹ describing them as an impoverished and remote subgroup of the broader Herero- speaking communities in the territory.²⁶² These supposedly indigenous groups were distinguished from the Topnaar of Sesfontein and the Swartboois of Fransfontein, forming a part of the various expanding Oorlam groups of mixed origin and descent.²⁶³ After the defeat of the Sesfontein and Fransfontein leadership in the colonial war of 1904–7, the perception that they were outsiders and intruders gained momentum. The early 1920s probably saw the most serious threat to their right to remain in the region, when the South African administration considered removing them from Kaoko. An intervention in terms of ethnic classification, which resonated in most of the later colonial, historiographical and oral representations materialized by the time missionary Heinrich Vedder visited Kaoko in 1914.²⁶⁴ While the missionary generically classified Kaoko's population as Herero, he elaborated a distinction based on economic differentiation, on political affiliation and on spatial distribution. This eventually led him to distinguish between western Ovahimba, wealthy pastoralists with large herds of cattle, all of them in some way or another loosely associated with Kakurukouje's leadership²⁶⁵ and eastern Ovatschimba, impoverished communities of pastoro-foragers, with a strong dependence on western Owambo.²⁶⁶ Ironically, while the Native Reserves Commission's initial formulation in 1921 had made a rather rough distinction between Oorlog's Herero (and Ovatjimba) and Muhona Katiti's and Kakurukouje's Ovatjimba, eventually the recognition of the three reserves in Government Notice 122 of 1923²⁶⁷ provided each reserve with its singular ethnic label, now making a distinction between Muhona Katiti's Ovahimba and Kakurukouje's (i.e. his successor Kahewa Nawa's) Ovatjimba.

²⁶¹ The South African spelling would be Ovatjimba.

²⁶² Authors such as Julius Kuntz, Georg Nitsche and Georg Hartmann would use the term Ovatschimba. In the late 19th century the terminology was much less coherent and e.g. W.C. Palgrave, the Special emissary to South West Africa in the late 1870s and early 1880s would generally refer to the inhabitants of Kaoko as Damara, the term then used for Herero.

²⁶³ See Part I.

²⁶⁴ Heinrich Vedder's report of 1914 broadly circulated in Kaoko in 2001 and 2002, and interviewees repeatedly referred to the missionary's importance for local historiographies.

²⁶⁵ Although Vedder strongly questioned Kakurukouje's significance as a political leader. In Vedder's report, as in most early German sources, the headman is named Kasupi. See NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, 1900–1914, Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokoveld, Vedder, H., „An Herrn Bezirksamtman von Zastrow“, Gaub, 1.9.1914, p. 125.

²⁶⁶ NAN ZBU 1011 J XIII b 5 Band 2, 1900–1914, Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen Kaokoveld, Vedder, H., „An Herrn Bezirksamtman von Zastrow“, Gaub, 1.9.1914, p. 122.

²⁶⁷ Bollig (1998a), p. 190.

4.3.2. Fractures – African mobility, European presence in Kaoko and open borders

With the disenfranchisement of the Kaoko Land and Mining Company in 1920,²⁶⁸ European settlement in Kaoko became entirely the administration's responsibility. While Manning had considered the areas suitable for eventual settlement by German or Boer farmers, namely the central, eastern and southern parts, systematic and coherent handling of the process was disturbed by the uncontrolled presence of Europeans in Kaoko, who were said to be involved in illegal trade and hunting in cooperation with Africans, and who were settling all over the region, including in the northern parts and along the Kunene River. Hence, in early 1920, the magistrate in Outjo was commissioned to assess the number of Europeans residing in the region, the legal basis of their residence and, most importantly, the type of activity with which they were involved. In his report the magistrate counted eight settlers²⁶⁹ residing at different springs including Kaross, Otjivazandu and Okorosave, with substantial herds of small and large stock.²⁷⁰ In addition, farmers residing outside Kaoko in the Outjo district, and apparently grazing their stock there had entrusted African herders with the protection and maintenance of their animals.²⁷¹ All in all, European-owned stock in Kaoko was estimated at 2274 head of cattle and 3540 head of small stock. Besides farming, the administration suspected that most of the Europeans mentioned in the report entertained lucrative business relationships illegally selling and buying stock, hunting big game and smuggling goods to and from southern Angola.²⁷²

As the administration was not in a position to control these activities, and the creation of settled conditions in Kaoko was the *sine qua non* of a future successful administration, the South African government began to investigate alternatives for the farmers in Kaoko in order to motivate them to leave the region and move to areas lying inside the Police Zone.²⁷³ Most of the settlers affected, including a number of Angolan Boers, were far from resisting the policy. They had been entrenched in disputes with African pastoralists in the region, increasingly so since population and stock numbers had risen.²⁷⁴ Economic conditions and

²⁶⁸ Bollig (1998a), p. 188.

²⁶⁹ While the name of the man was relevant for the administration, it is clear that the settlers lived with their families, at times with African women, such as B. Oldani, residing at Warmquelle in 1921, see NAN LAN 644 1640, Zessfontein Outjo reserve 1917–23, Magistrate Outjo to Secretary for SWA, April, 1921.

²⁷⁰ NAN LOU 3/1/1 A. 3/10/20, Magistrate Outjo, Kaokoveld Affairs, Magistrate Outjo to Secretary for SWA, 5.1.1920.

²⁷¹ NAN LOU 3/1/1 A. 3/10/20, Magistrate Outjo, Kaokoveld Affairs, Magistrate Outjo to Secretary for SWA, 5.1.1920.

²⁷² NAN A 450 10 3/5/1, Manning to Secretary for SWA, 4.10.1921.

²⁷³ NAN SWAA 2379, A 518/4/2, Kaokoveld, Farms in, 1921–53, which includes the correspondence between the farmers and the administration in the early 1920s.

²⁷⁴ NAN LOU 3/1/1 A. 2/2/1920, Magistrate Outjo, Kaokoveld Affairs, Manning to the Secretary for

prospects for European settlers were no doubt better within the Police Zone than in an area which, as we shall see, was increasingly being cut off from the colonial heartland and its markets. By 1923 most of the settlers who had owned a farm inside Kaoko in 1921 had left the region and moved somewhere else.²⁷⁵

Nevertheless, although the South African authorities tried to untangle the situation in Kaoko between 1917 and 1921 by dividing a dynamic and complex society into territorialized and distinct ethnic groups of Africans, and eventually separating these geographically from European settlers, the vision of the four reserves inside Kaoko soon proved to be just a theory that would remain on paper. The African population neither moved into nor remained within the tiny areas allotted to them in southern and northern Kaoko.²⁷⁶ The interaction between Europeans and Africans did not end here. As we shall see, the vibrancy of people transgressing the borders of the reserves and moving over the margins of the region would become a bone of contention in the years to come. In the early 1920s the containment of the African population and their herds continued to lie far beyond the administration's control.

4.4. Gender and counterinsurgency

This chapter has been concerned with the first two South African military expeditions to north-western Namibia in 1917 and 1919 led by the then resident commissioner of Owambo, major C.N. Manning. It has been argued that the reports stemming from these colonial military endeavours constitute a narrative of counter-insurgency in terms of Ranajit Guha's theoretical framework. As we saw, the core issues of the first four years of South African intervention in the northern areas gravitated around the need to disarm the African population, settle disputes or "native unrest" among rival political leaders and put an end to raids and damages caused to the human and physical environment, as well as to a range of activities deemed to be illegal, such as transregional trade and hunting. Manning's representation of the conflicts among the three men, Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom (Oorlog) becomes particularly significant in terms of colonial counter-insurgency. To take Guha's model a step further, it is an example of the gendered bias permeating the narrative appropriation of African agency and of political and social dynamics in colonised societies by colonial states and their representatives.

SWA, 21.5.1923.

²⁷⁵ NAN LOU 3/1/1 A. 2/2/1920, Magistrate Outjo, Kaokoveld Affairs, Manning to the Secretary for SWA, 21.5.1923.

²⁷⁶ People and herds moving beyond the borders of reserves, which were not fenced, was a phenomenon taking place all over Namibia in the early 1920s, see Silvester, J. (1998), p. 105; Silvester et al (1998), p. 21; Werner (1998), p. 99.

There were multiple ingredients to Manning's strategy of submission and control and it has been argued that the major's incompetent, but no less deliberate, misreading of the disputes over cattle between Katiti and Tom undermined the recognition of the complex relations and histories linking the men to each other. Manning, very much in line with a widespread colonial strategy, individualized disputes that were not simply a matter of personal interest or ambition, but reflected the dynamics of social conflict resolution and the multiple ties of powerful men within their society. The pastoral economy was an arena in which African communities negotiated the terms and conditions of political and economic power, of male claims to territorial authority and to human and natural resources. Cattle cases became a phenomenon involving men and women at all levels of society, and hence the question of legitimate and illegitimate circulation and appropriation of stock symbolically expressed a process of producing and re-producing social order and coherence, even more so as the political constellations in the region shifted.

It has been argued that in Kaoko the immigration of numerous groups of people and herds of animals in the mid-1910s disturbed a sensitive process of gradual repastoralization within the region and re-intensified processes of economic and social disruption. The demographic and socio-political shifts caused by the immigrations, however, could also partly be absorbed and blended into a changing economic and political landscape. Men such as Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom no doubt had their ambitions and their rivalry created a situation prone to the misuse of power, based as it was on technological means of violence, on wealth and on wielding control over people. Yet, it has been shown that these men had multiple connections within their social environment forcing them to negotiate the parameters of their role and status in society. The social mechanisms of control changed significantly when the South African military intervened in the region and the administration began to build up structures of indirect rule. The contested and limited power of the three headmen required a strategy by the new administration that allowed for the enforcement of centralized and stable political structures and for the implementation of a policy of indirect rule. Power and control became a shared area of interest between the colonial officers and the headmen striving to establish themselves within the region. The privilege of owning guns and ammunition, the legitimacy to enforce colonial law and order and the authority to supervise, control and determine the mobility of people and stock provided Kakurukouje, Katiti and Tom with new resources of power. The colonial administration reserved its right to support the headmen in cases of conflict with their subjects increasingly being disadvantaged in favour of a stable political elite capable of acting effectively.

Colonial counter-insurgency and the erosion of African responses to colonial submission at first glance clearly concerned Kakurukouje, Katiti and Tom. The South African adminis-

tration indeed put their mark on the conditions under which political rule would constitute itself and the part these men would play in the future articulation of colonial power. Beyond this, counter-insurgency significantly undermined the mechanisms of social control meant to cushion and respond to the power play among ambitious male agents. It has been argued that the colonial intervention in Kaoko in the late 1910s and early 1920s triggered off a process in which women, in particular, would gradually be driven to the margins of society and of the economy.

Part III

Gender & Containment

1. Introduction

The creation of colonial space and the enforcement of spatial conditions, which met the requirements of colonial economies and of settler societies, have been given broad attention in scholarly work on southern Africa.¹ As we saw earlier, the appropriation and conception of space by colonial regimes in Namibia varied through space and time. In the first two decades of South African rule, southern and central Namibia experienced a history of dramatic land dispossession, leading to the gradual removal of large parts of the African population into reserves situated on the colony's margins.² Processes of deterritorialization and relocation not only created spatial conditions which allowed for the control of people and their mobility,³ but also preconditioned and enforced the political and economic compression of African communities meant to serve the goals of disruptive colonial states. In the late 1920s the northern Namibian regions would experience the forceful incorporation into the South African colonial regime in very distinct ways. While the densely populated polities of Owambo were increasingly subjected to the necessities of the contract labour system,⁴ regions such as Kaoko and Kavango, with much lower population numbers, remained uncontained in terms of the role they were to play within the colony's economy and society.⁵ Nevertheless, the northern areas would soon share, as we shall see, a common space within a broader process of dividing colonial Namibia into two structurally distinct parts: the so-called Police Zone with its European settlement area, and its African counterpart, i.e. the northern "native" territories, where the larger part of the African population lived.

The declaration of three northern reserves and one southern reserve inside Kaoko in 1923 was the first South African intervention in the north-west aimed at creating spatial conditions, at least on paper, which would allow for future administration of the region. Dividing people became a characteristic and paradigmatic approach, which affected first the disentanglement of the settler community in the Outjo district and African pastoralists in

¹ See e.g. Maddox, G. (2006), *Sub-Saharan Africa: an environmental history*. Santa Barbara; Neuman, R. P. (2001), Africa's last 'wilderness': reordering space for political and economic control in colonial Tanzania. *Africa*, Vol. 71, No. 4: 641–665; Noyes, J. (1992), *Colonial Space: spatiality in the discourse of German South West Africa 1884–1915*. Chur; Von Oppen, A. (1996), The Village as Territory: Enclosing Locality in northwestern Zambia, 1950s to 1990s. *The Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2: 438–442; Mills, S. (1996), Gender and Colonial Space. *Gender, Place & Culture: a journal of feminist geography*, Vol. 3, Nr. 2: 125–147.

² Silvester et al (1998), p. 17; Werner (1998), pp. 100–108.

³ Noyes (1992).

⁴ Emmett (1999), chapter three, Hayes (1992), 339ff.

⁵ For the early colonial history of Kavango see Eckl, A. (2000), What Happened to Kavango's Early Colonial History? – The Colonial Production of Knowledge of Kavango Land and Peoples 1891–1951. paper presented at the conference *Public History, Forgotten History*, University of Namibia, Windhoek.

southern Kaoko, and the separation of African groups conceived of as being different. As the foregoing chapter has shown, this led to the creation of a Nama reserve around Sesfontein and the demarcation of three northern territories assigned to Ovaherero, Ovahimba and Ovatjimba respectively. Eventually, and in line with the policy of indirect rule, each reserve was relegated to the rule and control of a headman or chief.

As was the case in most Namibian regions, the cartographic and legal definition of areas in which the African population was supposed to live marked the formal beginning of long-lasting and highly contested processes of enforcing spatial structures on the ground.⁶ In northwest Namibia, creating a colonial social and political topography took place under specific geographic, economic and demographic conditions that required drastic and, at times, violent interventions by the representatives of the colonial state in the region. Two features concerned the South African administration in particular. The northern districts of Outjo in the west and Grootfontein in the east both included areas within and beyond the Police Zone, and the melange of diverging and, at times, conflicting colonial policies within each district had repeatedly led to problems in terms of handling and controlling colonial subjects.⁷ South African policy concerning Kaoko and its suitability for the colonial economy remained, however, ambivalent and, at times, almost hesitant. By the late 1920s, the continuity of a situation which appeared to remain beyond the state's control, allowing for unsupervised movements of people and stock within and beyond the reserves and for "illegal" hunting and lucrative business with game products, began to pose serious threats to the colony's agricultural sector. Eventually, southern Kaoko would face a drastic and disruptive intervention by the administration in 1929, a measure that would instigate a policy of division, which would affect the entire northern part of the Namibian territory.

2. Forced removals in southern Kaoko in 1929

Two reports by the South African administration from the mid-1920s allow us to describe the situation in southern Kaoko on the eve of the removal of more than 1200 people and their herds from their place of residence. They also shed some light on why the colonial administration would initiate what would turn out to be one of the major relocations in Namibia during the interwar period.⁸ In 1925, a small patrol consisting of a police sergeant, five constables, two drivers and two servants left Outjo in early November heading

⁶ Miescher (2009), p. 180; Werner (1998), p. 100; Silvester (1998), p. 105.

⁷ Miescher (2009), pp. 150 & 151. Proclamation No. 40 of 1920 had defined the boundaries of the Outjo district, which included the whole of Kaoko.

⁸ Bollig, M. (1998b), *The Colonial Encapsulation of the Northwestern Namibian Pastoral Economy. Africa*, 68, 4: 506–536, here p. 511.

for northern Kaoko, where they intended to meet C.H.L. Hahn, the officer in charge of native affairs in Owambo. From there they planned to continue to Hondoto, 16 miles south of Swartbooisdrift, to establish a police camp at one of the main crossing points on the Kunene River.⁹ The strengthened police presence on the northern border was one measure in a much more complex deployment aimed at preventing the spread of animal diseases, in particular lungsickness, from northern Namibia to the commercial farming area inside the Police Zone.¹⁰ Most of the stock encountered during the patrol's journey was judged to be in excellent condition and to the officers' satisfaction no cases of infected animals were recorded.¹¹ Indeed, the report eventually concentrated on the main issue at stake – the question of land pending European settlement — and, in line with most earlier colonial reports, southern Kaoko re-emerged as a highly promising and most suitable area.¹² A year later, the settlement plans gained momentum when the administrator in Windhoek commissioned the Department of Lands to send a representative to the northwest in order to explore the possibilities for commercial farming and agriculture.¹³ Following Manning's route of 1919, the party visited all the significant villages and springs from Ombombo to Okorosave, Otji-tundua, Otjikovare, Kaross and Kamanjab. While variations in terms of accessibility and quality of water and pastures were acknowledged, the final report on the inspection described the region to be more than appropriate for future European settlement. Suggesting a subdivision of the area into farms encompassing 10,000 to 15,000 hectares, the report explicitly referred to the necessity of removing the entire African population out of southern Kaoko and to relocate people and animals to one of the reserves in the north.¹⁴

The demand to remove the African pastoralists resulted in a petition, which had been launched by a group of farmers in the Outjo district in 1925.¹⁵ The settlers had for decades used their location on the edge of the Police Zone and the implied economic advantages

⁹ NAN SWAA 023 A 3/69, Report Kaokoveld Patrol 1925, Sgt. McHugh, South West Africa Police, to the Secretary for South West Africa, Karibib, 11.2.1926, p. 1.

¹⁰ NAN SWAA 023 A 3/69, Report Kaokoveld Patrol 1925, Sgt. McHugh, South West Africa Police, to the Secretary for South West Africa, Karibib, 11.2.1926, p. 15. We'll come back to the broader context of police supervision in the northern areas due to lungsickness in chapter 3.4.

¹¹ NAN SWAA 023 A 3/69, Report Kaokoveld Patrol 1925, Sgt. McHugh, South West Africa Police, to the Secretary for South West Africa, Karibib, 11.2.1926, p. 9.

¹² NAN SWAA 023 A 3/69, Report Kaokoveld Patrol 1925, Sgt. McHugh, South West Africa Police, to the Secretary for South West Africa, Karibib, 11.2.1926, pp. 21–25, where the report lists most of the big springs in southern Kaoko.

¹³ NAN LAN 36 80, Kaokofeld Inspection Report, 1926, Voorsitter Landraad, SWA, to Hoof Ambteenaar, Afdeling van Lande, Windhoek, January, 1926.

¹⁴ NAN LAN 36 80, Kaokofeld Inspection Report, 1926, Voorsitter Landraad, SWA, to Hoof Amptenaar, Afdeling van Lande, Windhoek, January, 1926, p. 5.

¹⁵ NAN AGV 90 V1/1 v3, Petition by the farmers and settlers association Outjo, 25.6.1925.

thereof,¹⁶ and up to the early 1920s they had repeatedly expanded the grazing boundary of their livestock herds into southern Kaoko.¹⁷ Due to pressures arising from regulations on the national and international stock market, which required guarantees in terms of animal health and quality¹⁸ and, in view of the administration's inability to supervise and control movement of cattle in the northern districts, the farmers increasingly opted to separate their herds from the ones owned by African pastoralists.¹⁹ They eventually urged the colonial government to create a stock-free zone, an idea that had been debated since the early 1920s, and was now being promoted as the sole reasonable way to go.²⁰

2.1. African communities in southern Kaoko in the late 1920s

In view of the planned removals of Africans living in southern Kaoko, the authorities in Windhoek commissioned the magistrate in Outjo to investigate the situation. They needed to find out how many people were living in the region under consideration, the number of stock they owned and whether they were paying grazing fees to the government.²¹ Accordingly, the magistrate ordered the police stationed in Kamanjab to provide their office with the information required.²² For obvious reasons determined by the geographical conditions and by the patterns of settlement and mobility, the police investigations first concerned the area around Kamanjab and then gradually followed the road northwards towards Otjivazandu and the border area with western Owambo. The police commander eventually reported to the magistrate that he estimated 300 Herero families living at the various springs and villages between Kamanjab and Otjivazandu, who together owned an estimated 3000 head of large stock, 12'000 head of small stock and 200 donkeys.²³ Two local headmen, Ludwig Tjibambo residing north of Kamanjab, and Langman Tjahura based at Otjivazandu, were claiming political leadership over an area extending from the Grootberg in the west to the Owambo border in the east. According to information given by Ludwig Tjibambo, the

¹⁶ See chapter 2.2.2., Part II.

¹⁷ NAN SWAA 023 A 3/69, Report Kaokoveld Patrol, 1925, Sgt. McHugh, SWA police, to the Secretary for SWA, Karibib, 11.2.1926, p. 8; Miescher (2009), p. 182.

¹⁸ We'll come back to these issues in more detail in chapter 3.4.

¹⁹ Miescher (2009), p. 162.

²⁰ Miescher (2009), p. 182.

²¹ NAN LOU 3/1/2 2/9/1, Kaokofeld Precedents 1926, NC Edwards, Windhoek, to magistrate Outjo, 11.8.1926. The South African administration introduced grazing fees for African pastoralists on Crown land soon after taking over of the colony and would extend the policy to the reserves in the early 1920s. In northern Namibia, where colonial presence was much weaker, grazing fees remained a theoretical claim far into the 1930s, but the regulations offered an argument e.g. when people were designated removal. On the grazing fees see Werner (1998), pp. 75–76.

²² NAN LOU 3/1/2 2/9/1, Kaokoveld Precedents 1926, Magistrate Outjo to NC Windhoek, 30.9.1926.

²³ NAN LOU 3/1/2 2/9/1, Kaokoveld Precedents 1926, PC Kamanjab to magistrate Outjo, 25.10.1926.

Herero communities had moved into southern Kaoko during the colonial war of 1904–7, but immigration by related families had continued up until the mid-1910s.²⁴ While figures given, particularly the ones concerning stock property, have to be read with caution, stock rearing seemed to be at the centre of their economy, and the police commander claimed that the communities in the area did not engage in any cultivation whatsoever.²⁵ A regular clandestine exchange business between African stock-owners and farmers and speculators in the Kamanjab area did, however, continue²⁶ and the local store successfully sold sugar, coffee, tea and cloth to Africans who would pay for the products with small stock.²⁷

Yet, while the administration's and police's attention was directed towards the Herero communities and their large herds, southern Kaoko remained home to other, more scattered groups living along the Ugab and Huab Rivers. These communities had diversified economies based on small stock husbandry, hunting and gathering and, wherever ecological and soil conditions allowed for it, also engaged in gardening.²⁸ The police based at Kamanjab had acknowledged the incapability of the local authorities to supervise the area in a westwards direction²⁹ and, in 1928, the commissioner in Ondagwa, C.H.L. Hahn, continued to raise serious concerns about the people he called "unauthorized squatters" in the region.³⁰

Due to limited resources the colonial administration decided to focus on those groups and their animals, which lived at the big springs along the main eastern route from Kamanjab northwards to Ombombo. The local authorities thereby hoped to put an end to the traffic between settlers and Africans in the district and to prevent any uncontrolled movement of large stock from the north-western area into those parts of the Outjo district falling inside the Police Zone and vice versa. As we shall see, the number of people and animals eventually affected by the forced removals far exceeded what the administration had anticipated,³¹ and the disruptive intervention would not remain uncontested.

²⁴ NAN LOU 3/1/2 2/9/1, Kaokoveld Precedents 1926, PC Kamanjab to magistrate Outjo, 25.10.1926, on Herero immigrations to southern Kaoko see Kuvare (1977), p. 198.

²⁵ NAN LOU 3/1/2 2/9/1, Kaokoveld Precedents 1926, PC Kamanjab to magistrate Outjo, 25.10.1926.

²⁶ NAN SWAA 1168 A 158/40, Native Reserve Kaokoveld, Vol. 1, 1926–46, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to Native Commissioner Windhoek, 16.2.1929.

²⁷ NAN NAO 018, monthly & annual reports, OC Native Affairs, Annual report 1930, Ondonga, n.d., p. 23.

²⁸ NAN PTJ 1 4/R, Monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–1931, Hillebrand, Tshimhaka, to Hahn, Ondonga, 3.7.1929.

²⁹ NAN LOU 3/1/2 2/9/1, Kaokoveld Precedents 1926, PC Kamanjab to magistrate Outjo, 25.10.1926.

³⁰ NAN SWAA 1168 A 158/40, Native Reserve Kaokoveld, Vol. 1, 1926–46, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to Native Commissioner, Windhoek, 8.10.1928. Only by the late 1930s would the administration attempt to get hold of the scattered communities along the southern rivers and to relocate them in reserves, see NAN SWAA 1169, A 158/40/3, Natives and stock in southern Kaokoveld opposite Franzfontein Reserve, 1932–51.

³¹ NAN NAO 029 24/1/3, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, OC Native Affairs Hahn, Ondonga,

2.2. The removals

From 1926 onwards the communities encountered in southern Kaoko had been repeatedly informed by the authorities that they would have to move further north and, in the spring of 1929, sergeant Cogill of the South West Africa police stationed in the north-west set off to move households and herds. The areas around Kamanjab, Kaross and Otjivazandu up to Ombombo were cleared and were intended to constitute a neutral zone, in which no people or large stock would be allowed to stay or move through. In June 1929 the police could inform officer Hahn in Ondangwa that the removals had been completed and that people had shown but little resistance and generally cooperated with the police officers on the ground.³² The number of people and herds moved proved much more substantial than expected. In his census, the sergeant listed 393 men, 448 women and 360 children, who had been forced out of their places of residence. With them they took 12'308 head of large stock, 16'700 head of small stock, 21 horses and 400 donkeys.³³ Cogill perceived people to be loosely associated with one another but could not identify any clear political leader. Nevertheless, he suggested some men who would be suitable candidates for future administration, among them Langman Tjahura and Ludwig Tjibambo.³⁴ Accordingly, the relocation of households and herds at designated places between Ombombo and Kaoko Otavi went hand in hand with an orchestrated social reorganization of the community around these two designated headmen.³⁵

While the general instruction by the administration had been to move anyone from southern Kaoko north of Ombombo,³⁶ it soon became obvious that neither the police officers in charge of the removals, nor the dislocated people (who had to secure the survival of their herds in the new areas allotted to them) could make sense of the vague regulations

14.5.1929.

³² NAN SWAA 1168 A 158/40, Native Reserve Kaokoveld, Vol. 1, 1926–46, Extract from monthly report, South West Africa Police, Tshimhaka, May & June, 1929, n.d.; NAN PTJ 1 4/R, Monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–31, Hillebrand, Police Tshimhaka, OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 3.7.1929.

³³ NAN PTJ 4/R, Monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–31, Cogill, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 3.7.1929.

³⁴ NAN NAO 029 24/1/3, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Cogill, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 2.5.1929. Besides Ludwig Tjibambo and Langman Tjahura, the following men were named: Simon, Kamuhona, Kleopas and Andreas (no surnames are given).

³⁵ NAN SWAA 1168 A 158/40, Native Reserve Kaokoveld, Vol. 1, 1926–46, Extract from monthly report, South West Africa Police, Tshimhaka, May & June, 1929, n.d. Langman and followers were relocated at Otjitundua, Ludwig, Johannes, Simon, Kleopas, Zacheus, Jutas and followers were relocated in the Ombombo area, Manuel, Hiakombe and followers were relocated at Otathemba. Some families were placed at Kaoko Otavi and Oruwanjai.

³⁶ NAN NAO 029 24/1/3, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Secretary for SWA to Magistrate Outjo, 16.3.1929.

which failed to specify which springs, waterholes and cattle posts would actually come to lie within or beyond the neutral zone.³⁷ From the very beginning, Hahn had repeatedly raised the problem of relocating the southern communities in the central and northern parts of Kaoko and his concerns increased when the scale of the removals became apparent. He eventually accepted sergeant's Cogill's belief that the necessity for water and pasture would soon force the resettled groups to gradually move northwards and, ideally, settle more permanently in one of the northern reserves in Kaoko.³⁸ Accordingly, Hahn commissioned the police stationed at Tshimhaka on the Kunene border to investigate which waterholes and springs in the northern part of the region would eventually be suitable for the allocation of further cattle³⁹ and the commissioner requested that Cogill improve the accessibility of water in the area between Ombombo and Kaoko Otavi.⁴⁰

2.2.1. Shifting back

The removal of the Herero communities soon threatened to end in a situation of chaos and disaster, both in terms of the administration's original plan and in terms of the social and economic security of the removed households. The drastic intervention by the South African administration occurred during a period of drought, which by the end of 1929, turned into a famine.⁴¹ The pastures and water resources available would not have been sufficient to sustain such a concentration of people and animals under favourable climatic conditions and the additional lack of rain made matters worse. Inhabitants in the vast areas of Kaoko feared the eventual drying up of springs, particularly in the Ombombo area.⁴² In view of the miserable conditions in the areas designated to receive households and herds from the

³⁷ NAN NAO 029 24/1/3, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Cogill, Tshimhaka Police, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 2.5.1929; NAN NAO 029 24/1/3, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Post Commander Kamanjab to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, 6.8.1929; NAN PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–1931 Cogill, Police Tshimhaka to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, July 1930.

³⁸ NAN SWAA 1168 A 158/40, Native Reserve Kaokoveld, Vol. 1, 1926–46, Extract from monthly report, South West Africa Police, Tshimhaka, May & June, 1929, n.d.; NAN NAO 029 24/1/3, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1929–34, Hahn to the secretary for SWA, Ondionga, 18.7.1929.

³⁹ NAN NAO 029 24/1/3, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1929–34, Hillebrand, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, May, 1929.

⁴⁰ PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–1931, Cogill, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 30.11.1929.

⁴¹ NAN NAO 029 24/1/3, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Hahn to the Secretary for SWA, 14.5.1929 and Cogill, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 15.2.1930.

⁴² NAN NAO 029 24/1/3, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Cogill, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 2.5.1929.

south, the authorities faced individual initiatives aiming for permission to leave Kaoko and move to Owambo.⁴³ The commissioner granted these requests in late 1930.⁴⁴

But the more characteristic response of people who had been removed was to immediately criticize the conditions prevailing in the new region. More importantly, they eventually gradually shifted back to the south, towards their original place of residence. On the 6th August 1929, sergeant Erasmus of the Kamanjab police informed the magistrate in Outjo that two headmen, Thomas Enjahi and Langman Tjahura, had come as delegates of residents of Otjitundua to the police office in order to make a complaint about the deterioration of their livelihood.⁴⁵ Overstocking and insufficient water had apparently led to a situation in which stock was dying in heaps and people were no longer in a position to provide for the basic subsistence needs of their families. Two months later, Erasmus adjourned himself northwards and visited Otjondeka, Otjitundua, Ombombo and the area around Kaoko Otavi,⁴⁶ where he faced extensive complaints by those who had been removed. None of the places the sergeant visited had enough water and grazing grounds to sustain the additional animals and Erasmus eventually drew a daunting conclusion:

I did not go round the werfs only, but went into the veldt for considerable distances and am obliged to admit that I can hardly understand how it is possible that the stock are still alive under those circumstances. A large number of stock have been moved to these places and you can in reality say that no grazing, whatsoever, remains. The stock are naturally in a very poor condition. (...) if they are not given an early opportunity of moving to better grazing I am afraid that heavy losses will occur and it is to be feared that a famine might result (...)

The commissioner's reaction to the complaints and to the Kamanjab police who supported the complainants was diplomatic, but he still persisted. While Hahn acknowledged that the drought had hit the northern and north-western areas dreadfully hard and that resources needed for the pastoral economy had gravely run short, he nevertheless insisted on the viability and sustainability of the administration's policy that had led to the removals.⁴⁷ But, contrary to the police officer based in Kamanjab, he dismissed the claims raised as an ex-

⁴³ NAN PTJ 1 4/R, Monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–1931, Cogill, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 22.6.1930.

⁴⁴ NAN PTJ 1 4/R, Monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–1931, du Buisson, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 31.12.1930.

⁴⁵ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, sergeant Erasmus, SWA Police Kamanjab, to the Magistrate Outjo, 6.8.1929.

⁴⁶ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, Sergeant Erasmus, SWA Police Kamanjab, to the Magistrate Outjo, 25.10.1929.

⁴⁷ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, OC Native Affairs Ondangwa, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA Windhoek, 23.11.1929.

pression of political manoeuvre and grumbling by the headmen who, in the commissioner's view, were simply resisting their removal from places where they had been living before.⁴⁸ Hahn's premature minimization of the negative response to the resettlements, and the fact that people eventually got less space than they were originally promised⁴⁹ would soon cause further resistance. By February 1930, the removed households gradually began to move back to the south toward their areas of origin,⁵⁰ which they did for various reasons. Moving south obviously meant accessing further pastures and water resources and was therefore aimed at securing the survival of herds. At the same time, rumours about eventual European settlement had apparently pushed people to occupy southern Kaoko again, thereby forcefully expressing their reluctance to give up their rights of settlement to intruders.⁵¹

Neither sergeant Cogill nor commissioner Hahn comprehended the motivation for moving back into the neutral zone. They questioned whether lack of water and pastures could really be the factor motivating the households that moved back⁵² and suspected that Langman Tjahura and others simply moved because of the good smuggling opportunities in southern Kaoko, where a person could move stock south into the Police Zone or east into Owambo.⁵³ Hahn's concerns regarded the policy of administration and his plans to eventually put all Herero in Kaoko under the leadership of Vita Tom.⁵⁴ The commissioner suspected the returnees showed their reluctance towards political tutelage and harboured claims to independence.⁵⁵ Local authority policy was not coherent in the handling of the removals or in managing the responses of the local population. As we saw, the police in Kamanjab and the magistrate in Outjo, who had known some of the representatives of the southern Kaoko communities for years, had shown some support for protests against the removals.⁵⁶ In contrast to the authorities in Windhoek and to the commissioner based in

⁴⁸ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, to the Native Commissioner Windhoek, 27.11.1929.

⁴⁹ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, sergeant Erasmus, SWA Police Kamanjab, to the Magistrate Outjo, 25.10.1929.

⁵⁰ NAN PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–1931, sergeant du Buisson, police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 31.3.1930 and sergeant du Buisson, police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 30.4.1930.

⁵¹ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, sergeant Cogill, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, 15.2.1930.

⁵² PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–1931, Cogill, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, July 1930.

⁵³ PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–1931, Cogill, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 14.6.1930.

⁵⁴ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, OC Native Affairs Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Ondangua, 18.7.1929.

⁵⁵ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, OC Native Affairs Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Ondangua, 31.12.1929.

⁵⁶ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, sergeant McIntyre, magistrate Outjo, to the

Ondangwa, local interests, attuned to the conditions and requirements in the Outjo district, had led the magistrate to raise the issue of labour shortages, which had intensified due to the removals.⁵⁷ But in the end, the hesitant position within the district was mainly due to the local officers' knowledge that the few policemen stationed in the area would never be in a position to adequately patrol the border of the neutral zone; even in those cases where there was clarity with regard to the position of the border.⁵⁸ Regardless of the concerns raised by the regional bodies of the colonial state, the authorities in Windhoek at first decided to discard the criticism in favour of Hahn's overarching plan of a future "native" administration in Kaoko under his direction.⁵⁹ Yet, the *détente* was short, as enduring drought conditions and the people's continuing attempts to sustain their herds and secure the survival of their households eventually forced the commissioner to legalize their gradual return to southern Kaoko, first by allowing access to waterholes in the immediate vicinity of Ombombo⁶⁰ and then by considering a temporary reopening of the neutral zone.⁶¹ Indeed, in 1930 Hahn's policy in southern Kaoko had come close to failure, and it would have remained so, had there not been a coincidental outbreak of lungsickness among the southern Kaoko cattle herds.⁶²

The outbreak of lungsickness in April 1930 and the immediate pressure it placed on farmers in the Outjo district⁶³ led to the second removal from the neutral zone, this time including residents of the western Grootberg area with their animals. In June of the same year, government veterinary officer N.G. Schmid, who was based at Omaruru, left for Kaoko, where he eventually met sergeant Cogill and sergeant du Buisson at Ombombo. Within a period of three weeks, Schmid had inoculated more than 6500 head of large stock, which had all been driven to the Omombo and Otjitundua area on the police's request.⁶⁴ In his

native commissioner Windhoek, 12.3.1929, supporting in particular Ludwig Tjibambo's request not to be moved to the north.

⁵⁷ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, magistrate Outjo to the native commissioner Windhoek, 6.8.1929.

⁵⁸ NAN PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–1931, sergeant du Buisson to OC Native Affairs Ondonga, Hahn, 31.3.1930.

⁵⁹ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, Secretary for SWA to Magistrate Outjo, 16.3.1929.

⁶⁰ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, 31.12.1929.

⁶¹ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, 8.3.1930.

⁶² NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, Magistrate Outjo to OC Native Affairs Ondangua, 12.4.1930.

⁶³ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, Magistrate Outjo to OC Native Affairs Ondangua, 12.4.1930.

⁶⁴ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Govt. Vet. Officer, N.G. Schmid, Omaruru, to the Senior Veterinary Officer, Windhoek, 10.7.1930. We will discuss the inoculation

report, Schmid remained cautious regarding the eradication of lungsickness. He preferred that Kaoko remain classified as an infected area for an indefinite period to come as a precaution. He urged the authorities to close the neutral zone for good and to prevent Herero, as well as Owambo pastoralists, from entering the region. The veterinarian had left no doubt that it was precisely the neutral zone where the disease had its origin, assuming regular traffic with and contact between cattle from Kaoko and Owambo there.⁶⁵ The administration could not afford any delay in fixing the northern border of the neutral zone along the 19° parallel latitude.⁶⁶ In order to prevent any transgression by Africans and by their animals, Schmid requested a temporary police post either at Ombombo or at Otjivazandu in view of the proved inability by the police at Tshimhaka and Kamanjab to exercise effective control.⁶⁷

With the definition of the neutral zone and its northern boundary in *Government Notice No. 178 of 1930*, the administration laid the formal ground for an increasingly tight policy in southern Kaoko. Henceforth, all African-owned large stock found inside the neutral zone was shot without compensation.⁶⁸ The violent interventions proved successful and they changed the patterns of mobility that people chose as they faced an enforced cleared zone. In 1931, sergeant Cogill still encountered a number of households that had moved into the neutral zone, however, in contrast to the period immediately after the first removal, this was now mainly women and children who had moved southwards with their herds of small stock.⁶⁹ Apparently, the pastoral communities had become reluctant to risk their large stock being shot. The crisis caused by the removals and the severe drought continued to demand the mobility of both people and animals, including to their former pastures in southern Kaoko. While Cogill gradually sent people back to their new homes in the Otjitundua area, leaving their small stock unhurt, he shot all the dogs. These provided evidence to the police that people had entered the neutral zone with the sole aim of hunting and trading with game.⁷⁰

campaign in more detail in Part V.

⁶⁵ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Govt. Vet. Officer, N.G. Schmid, Omaruru, to the Senior Veterinary Officer, Windhoek, 10.7.1930, p. 5.

⁶⁶ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Govt. Vet. Officer, N.G. Schmid, Omaruru, to the Senior Veterinary Officer, Windhoek, 10.7.1930 p. 6.

⁶⁷ NAN NAO 029 24/1/2, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Govt. Vet. Officer, N.G. Schmid, Omaruru, to the Senior Veterinary Officer, Windhoek, 10.7.1930, p. 6.

⁶⁸ NAN NAO 029, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Police Commader Kamanjab to Magistrate Outjo, 17.3.1931.

⁶⁹ NAN NAO 029, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Sergeant Cogill, SWA Police to the Native Commissioner Owamboland, "Natives found in the Neutral Zone Prohibited by Govt. Notice No. 178 of 1930", 15.6.1932. Cogill counted 15 women, 2 men and 27 children belonging to seven households. They disposed of 196 head of small stock, 33 dogs and 4 donkeys.

⁷⁰ NAN NAO 029, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–34, Sergeant Cogill, SWA Police to the Native Commissioner Owamboland, "Natives found in the Neutral Zone Prohibited by Govt. Notice No.

3. Enforcing reserves

The clearing of the southern part of Kaoko and its separation from the settler area in the Outjo district drew its logic from two distinct, although related, schemes of border policy. On the one hand, the southern border was one element in a complex repertoire of means for demarcating and clearing geographical and social space within Kaoko; on the other hand, all the external borders of the region were linked to a structural reorganization of territorial conditions in colonial Namibia as a whole.⁷¹ While these processes were linked to each other, the imposition of small reserves inside Kaoko affected its inhabitants in a more immediate way, as it increasingly determined the daily mobility of people, households and herds.

Since the early 1920s the South African administration had begun to move African communities into consolidated reserves on the outskirts of the territory.⁷² In central Namibia, these dislocations, and with them the separation from the settler agricultural economy, were strongly linked to the necessities of the land and labour question. Scholars have applied this argument generally to the enforcement of the reserves policy in Kaoko throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and have cast the protection and expansion of the Outjo settler society and their economic interests as a crucial concern in determining administration procedures in the region.⁷³ As we have seen, the Outjo settler community did indeed play a significant role within the process of border demarcation and implementation of a southern cleared zone. Nevertheless, I would argue that the terms and parameters of the reserves policy in Kaoko in the 1920s and 1930s remained incoherent and fractured and were influenced by a variety of considerations, whilst continuing to depend on the specificity of local constellations.

3.1. Imposing external borders

As we previously noted, the debates around the removals gathered impetus when cases of lung sickness were reported in 1930. In fact, the official narrative about the demarcation and control of Kaoko's external borders, as can be traced in the colonial archives, relied heavily on arguments about stock health and disease and the uncontrolled movement of cattle between the northern areas and the Police Zone.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the borders of Kaoko, particularly the northern border, which separated two distinct colonial systems, had historically favoured the continuous movement of people and a thriving trade in goods, including

178 of 1930", 15.6.1932.

⁷¹ We'll come back to this issue in more detail in chapter 3.4.

⁷² Discussed in chapter 4, Part II below.

⁷³ Bollig (1998b), p. 512. We'll come back to this argument.

⁷⁴ Bollig refers to this argument, see Bollig (1998b), p. 511.

stock and game.⁷⁵ Under South African colonial rule, these were increasingly considered illicit or illegal. Taken together, the region's external borders ideologically and practically aimed at creating the contingent entity of Kaoko as a reserve for Africans or, put differently, to delimit the margins of a colonial space and territory and thereby to lay down the pre-conditions for a settled and organized situation within the region. In terms of the colonial policy, the external borders of Kaoko became part and parcel of a strategy of division and separation and eventually of enclosure. These divisions affected different communities in different ways. The specific situation in southern Kaoko, where the aim was to distance the farming areas within the Police Zone from those used by African pastoralists in a reserve in the making,⁷⁶ constituted one variation within the spectrum of trans-border dynamics and its colonial undermining.

3.1.1. The northern border

The situation on the northern border was different and archival documentation on the Angolan–Namibian border's western section in Kaoko from the early 1920s is minimal for various reasons. While historical linkages and mobility among the communities living on either side of the Kunene had endured throughout the German colonial period into the first years of South African rule,⁷⁷ the focus of colonial preoccupations lay further east in Owambo, where the large Kwanyama kingdom strongly linked Angolan and Namibian territories.⁷⁸ Beginning in 1920, negotiations between the Portuguese and the South African authorities to demarcate their common border focused on issues regarding access to and future large scale use of the Kunene waters and the huge cataracts, to which both governments claimed rights.⁷⁹ The Portuguese and the South West African authorities reached a formal agreement in 1926, but the regulations speak more to the symbolic requirement of both colonial states to fix their international borders,⁸⁰ rather than addressing issues regarding African pastoralists' residence along the river or their use of it.⁸¹

What bothered the South Africans both in Owambo and Kaoko was trade across the border that involved Africans, Boers and Portuguese⁸² and, as we saw earlier, the continuing

⁷⁵ See chapter 2.3. Part I above.

⁷⁶ To sustain this, Proclamation No. 26 of 1928 declared the northern and central portions of Kaoko to fall into a game reserve.

⁷⁷ See chapter 3 Part I.

⁷⁸ Hayes (1992).

⁷⁹ Hayes (1992), p. 265.

⁸⁰ Bollig (1998b), p. 515.

⁸¹ Hayes (1992), p. 265.

⁸² See Part I.

circulation of arms.⁸³ In contrast to the period between 1915 and 1920, the official narratives concerning illegal trade over the northern border now stressed issues of animal health and disease and hence concerned the crossing of cattle from and into Angola. In terms of the uncontrolled spread of diseases, Kaoko was no less problematic than its eastern neighbour. The Kunene River served as a natural border and its specific shape in Kaoko, due to its comparatively stable course throughout the mountainous area,⁸⁴ did favour colonial aims of controlling mobility over the river, which was concentrated at a few major drifts. In view of their limited resources, the colonial authorities eventually focused on these strategic sites along the river. The police post opening at Tshimhaka in 1926, one of the most significant crossing points, perfectly supported this strategy of carefully selected supervision. Yet, ironically, it was precisely this alleged natural reliability of the Kunene as a border which soon proved to be an illusion. This fact was partly acknowledged by the administration a few years later. In 1931 pastures and water places along the Kunene were closed down⁸⁵ and the administration eventually decided to establish a cleared zone along the northern river in the late 1930s.⁸⁶

3.1.2. The eastern and western border areas

The border, which most synthesized and reflected the complexities and, at times, confusions within northern colonial policy in the 1920s was that between Owambo and Kaoko. The colonial policy of dividing the two regions drew its necessity and legitimacy from a range of concerns. The demarcation of the eastern border had been a cumbersome process since the early German period, when its course had mainly been a bone of contention between the Kaoko Land and Mining Company and the colonial government.⁸⁷ The border operated more in a cartographic than in a real sense up to the 1920s. Here again, animal health and the control of disease became the main narrative element in the official argument for a separation of Kaoko from its eastern neighbouring regions. Cattle movements had been formally curtailed since 1926,⁸⁸ when the colonial authorities were particularly preoccupied with linkages between southern Kaoko and Owambo.⁸⁹ After veterinary officer Schmid's report on lungsickness and his recommendation to close the border in 1930, the commissioner

⁸³ See Part II.

⁸⁴ Much in contrast e.g. to the Kavango and Zambesi Rivers in the east.

⁸⁵ NAN NAO 28, Kaokoveld General, 1925–30, Sergeant du Buisson to the OC native affairs Ovamboland, Hahn, re: lungsickness Kaoko, 21.7.1931.

⁸⁶ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–1938), Acting Chief Native Commissioner to the Administrator, Windhoek, 25.5.1938.

⁸⁷ See chapter 4.2. Part I.

⁸⁸ Bollig (1998b), p. 512.

⁸⁹ See above chapter 3.2.2.

in Ondangwa had entertained the idea of an unoccupied zone between the two regions in a letter to the secretary for the protectorate in Windhoek.⁹⁰ The idea became increasingly urgent when in early 1931 the police officers based in Tshimhaka, who were supposed to patrol the northern and the eastern border, expressed concerns about their (too) many duties and urged the administration to seriously consider the prohibited area between Kaoko and Owambo.⁹¹ Their request was accepted and, throughout the 1930s, commissioner Hahn could repeatedly entrust the police officers on the ground to close down water and grazing places along this border too.⁹²

Nevertheless, livestock health was but one element guiding the policy of separating Kaoko from Owambo, and Hahn's interests went far beyond animal health. Naturally, any activity linking the neighbours, which the colonial authorities considered illegal – be it trade relations or smuggling, particularly the continuing circulation of arms, or entrenchments in the realm of the pastoral economy – undermined the commissioner's vision of successful administration in the northern territories. Ideologically, the separation of the north-western region from Hahn's core area of interest in Owambo aimed at constituting and enforcing separate, coherent tribal areas. As long as the external borders remained permeable to people and animals, a successful policy of indirect rule inside Kaoko remained unrealistic. The commissioner was right in his perception of the Kaoko–Owambo border area as one of continuous interaction, requiring the authorities' immediate and vigilant attention if this interaction was to be minimized. Links among various communities in Kaoko and Owambo had endured against all odds throughout German and early South African colonial rule. Economic and social interaction continued to be crucial for the regional economies, particularly in the late 1920s, when the drought period began to make itself felt throughout the northern parts of the colony, and transregional exchange became essential for securing the survival of herds and households. Indeed, the colonial enforcement of an eastern border for Kaoko ignored patterns of mobility within the pastoral economy and undermined long-standing trade relations. Moreover it blocked one of the main north-south routes linking Owambo, Kaoko and the Kamanjab areas. Not surprisingly, it elicited negative responses by an African population facing a climatic and economic crisis. As we shall see, the eastern border would soon lead to an endless series of subversions, transgressions and offences by

⁹⁰ NAN NAO 029 24/1/3, southern Kaokoveld affairs, 1926–34, OC Native Affairs Ondangwa, Hahn, to the Secretary for the Protectorate, 20.9.1930.

⁹¹ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld general, Vol.2, Police Tshimhaka to OC Native Affairs Ondangwa, re lung sickness Kaokoveld, 13.5.1931.

⁹² NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld general, Vol.2, OC Native Affairs Ondangwa, Hahn, to the secretary for the Protectorate, 5.10.1931.

African pastoralists, hunters and traders, men and women and, correspondingly, to relentless intervention by the various colonial agents.

There is a gap when it comes to the history of Kaoko's external borders in terms of colonial discourse and the available archival documentation regarding the western border area, i.e. the coastal region along the shore of the Atlantic sea. Undoubtedly, the natural limit of the Atlantic shore significantly diminished the colonial state's need to direct its attention westwards, especially since the northern portion of Namibia's coast offered no possibility for creating a marine economy. If anything, the police presence and control over the coastal area was very limited and, in view of the difficulties faced along the other borders, the western border of Kaoko was far from being a priority. But colonial lack of interest and the administration's implicit conception of the coast as an unproblematic area not in need of supervision did not correspond to the continuing significance the western part played for Kaoko's inhabitants. As we saw earlier, the coastal region, although inhospitable and hardly accessible, mountainous in the north and increasingly sandy and dry in the south, had repeatedly offered refuge and shelter to people and animals in times of socio-political or ecological insecurity and crisis.⁹³ Furthermore, the western routes to the south, which linked the Sesfontein area in particular with the coastal town of Walvis Bay in central Namibia, had never been drawn into the realm of colonial control, and remained beyond the state's grasp. Indeed, the possibility of moving towards the coast, if conditions required, remained an option for the south-western inhabitants of Kaoko throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

3.2. Internal borders – containing the 1923 reserves

The demarcation and securing of Kaoko's external borders went hand in hand with the enforcement of internal spatial structures. The declaration of a southern reserve around Sesfontein and three northern reserves allotted to Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom and their followers in 1923 had been a first attempt by the South African administration to regulate the socio-political landscape in the region to its advantage.⁹⁴ The removals from southern Kaoko in 1929 led to a concentration of people and animals in an increasingly shrinking geographical space. For the majority of the African population, the consequences would be dramatic. The colonial administration increasingly began to implement its policy and, while in 1923 the four tiny reserves had been no more than a theoretical vision, forcing people into the areas set apart became the most immediate interest pursued.

⁹³ See Part I of the PhD thesis.

⁹⁴ See chapter 4 Part II.

3.2.1. *The southern Sesfontein reserve*

Somehow unexpectedly, these interventions and transformations involved an almost complete neglect of the remaining community in the southern reserve of Sesfontein on the part of the South African colonial administration. Archival material between 1923 and the mid-1930s is almost non-existent, and the annual reports by the commissioner in Ondangwa, which had a special section on Kaoko, do not refer to the southern reserve until the late 1930s.⁹⁵ Similarly, missionary reporting on south-western Kaoko came to a halt in the early 1920s, as the Rhenish Mission Society lacked a representative in Outjo between 1923 and 1927, and hence lost track of developments taking place there.⁹⁶ The narrative exclusion of Sesfontein and its African community has been correspondingly reproduced and further amplified in the historiography on Kaoko, although the place remained part of the region for several decades to come. As said before, in the early 1920s the inhabitants of Sesfontein were almost removed from Kaoko, as plans to have them relocated in a consolidated reserve within the Police Zone had gained momentum.⁹⁷ Eventually, the Native Reserves Commission granted the community its right to stay in 1923 and confirmed the validity of the German allocation of a reserved area. Sesfontein re-entered the realm of colonial attention in 1929 when, in the course of the forced removals in southern Kaoko, some of the affected households attempted to evade their compulsory emigration northwards. Unexpectedly, and in contradiction to the administration's perception of so-called tribal constellations in Kaoko, the magistrate in Outjo informed the native commissioner in Windhoek that two men, Kazingovido and Moses Tjikunda, requested the colonial authorities to allow them to move to the Sesfontein area rather than being placed north of the cleared zone.⁹⁸ The request undermined the administration's layout of the neutral zone. Sesfontein obviously remained part of a southern socio-economic landscape, linking Kaoko with the Kamanjab area and with places inside the Police Zone, most prominently Fransfontein and Outjo itself. In this area a pastoral economy based on small stock and, increasingly, keeping horses and donkeys continued to stimulate incentives for securing subsistence and sustaining local economies.⁹⁹ The request by the two men in 1928 reflected the development of one of the

⁹⁵ See NAN NAO 018, Monthly and Annual Reports, NC Owamboland, 1924–1930; NAN NAO, Monthly and Annual Reports, NC Owamboland, 1932–36.

⁹⁶ ELCRN V27, Gemeinde-Chronik der Missionsstation Outjo, D.S.W. Afrika, 1904–1967; Baumann, J. (1967), *Van Sending tot Kerk. 125 Jaar Rynse Sendingsarbeid in Suidwes-Afrika*. Windhoek, p. 171.

⁹⁷ See chapter 4.3.1. Part II.

⁹⁸ NAN SWAA 1168 A 158/40, Native Reserve Kaokoveld, 1926–46, Magistrate Outjo to NC Windhoek, 11.9.1928.

⁹⁹ ELCRN V 27, Gemeinde Chronik der Missionsstation Outjo, D.S.W. Afrika, 1904–1967; also Bollig (1998b), p. 520, where the author refers to the businessman Gärtner trading sheep with Ka-

main routes of trade in the southern region. Indeed, soon afterwards, sergeant Cogill, who had been entrusted with the removals, reported to the authorities in Ondagwa that some of the so-called shifted households now occupied water-places and pastures at Khowarib and Warmquelle, the two main sites along the road between Kamanjab and Sesfontein, and that requests to move into the south-western reserve continued.¹⁰⁰

Nevertheless, the cleared zone, the prohibition of cattle movements and the separation of Sesfontein from its southern neighbours and partners did affect the community in the short term. The drought period, which lasted into the early 1930s, hit the southern part of Kaoko as much as it did the regions to the north, and the cleared zone had deprived local pastoralists from pastures they would have otherwise used in times of ecological crisis.¹⁰¹ The situation worsened when the administration began to curtail trade with small stock linking Kaoko with the areas south of the cleared zone and eventually forbade any exchange and movement of sheep and goats in 1935.¹⁰² When in 1936 the administrator of South West Africa visiting Kaoko met a delegation from Sesfontein under the leadership of Nathanael Uixamab, the notes from their conversation left no doubt about the increased isolation felt by the local community as a consequence of the administration's border policy.¹⁰³ Stating that the closing of Kaoko had put their people under great strain, the delegation questioned the restrictions on pastures and the ban on trade with small stock. Due to the increasing limitations placed on the reserve and, particularly, because of the serious drought, herds had been decimated and the community was left with no more than 600–800 sheep, 2000 goats and some 500–600 cattle.

3.2.2. *The three northern reserves*

The effects of the South African border policy were no less felt further north, although there colonial attention and interests were much more immediate and continuous. The definition

oko, although Bollig does not mention that this trade mainly involved people from the Sesfontein area.

¹⁰⁰ NAN PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–31, Sergeant Cogill, Otjitundua, to Police Commander Tshimhaka, 15.6.1931. Cogill eventually closed his report by asking if there was “a zone between the two tribes”, i.e. between the so-called Nama community in Sesfontein and the Herero communities in their vicinity.

¹⁰¹ ELCRN V 27, Gemeinde Chronik der Missionsstation Outjo, D.S.W. Afrika, 1904–1967; the loss of the southern pastures was also referred to by interviewees, e.g. interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001.

¹⁰² Formally done by Government Notice 37 of 1935. See Miescher (2009), pp. 206ff.

¹⁰³ NAN SWAA 459 A 50/121/1, Administrator 1936, Notes on an interview with his Honour the Administrator by a deputation from the Topnaar Hottentots of Zessfontein, southern Kaokoveld, 13. July 1936. Nathanael Uixamab had succeeded his father Levi Uixamab in the early 1920s; he is called Kusava by Otjiherero-speaking people in Kaoko.

and demarcation of the three northern reserves in 1923 was initially aimed at securing definite territories for the three headmen, Kakurukouje, Muhona Katiti and Vita Tom, where the three groups considered to be different, i.e. Ovaherero, Ovahimba and Ovatjimba, would reside. While the administration acknowledged that the model of the three reserves was a theoretical one at that time, it legitimized the scheme by referring to the historical genesis of the various groups and the territories set apart for them. Furthermore, from 1926 onwards, attempts to gradually move Kaoko's inhabitants into the tiny reserves became more serious in terms of interventions on the ground. To sustain the heightened efforts, the first population census was conducted in 1927, illustrating the following situation:

Oorlog's reserve, occupied by Herero, Oorlams (sic), Ovahimba and Ovatjimba, counted a population of 829 people; Muhona Katiti's reserve for Ovahimba and Ovatjimba, 426 people, and Kahewa Nawa's (Kakurukouje's successor) reserve for Ovahimba and Ovatjimba 378, the first two reserves having a slight majority of women.¹⁰⁴ Yet, an almost corresponding number of people, 1549 men and women, remained outside the areas allotted to the headmen, and lived in the central and southern parts of Kaoko.¹⁰⁵

The demographic distribution changed significantly as we saw when the administration removed people from southern Kaoko to the north and began to investigate schemes for the allocation of shifted households and herds. In May 1928 sergeant Hillebrand of the police in Tshimhaka reported to Hahn that stock counts provided by households residing outside the reserves in places such as Ombombo, Okorosave and Kaoko Otavi were substantial. The police officer estimated cattle to reach more than 4800 and numbered small stock around 10'000, and hence rightly raised concerns about the sustainability of plans to place additional herds inside the northern reserves.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, the envisaged concentration of people and stock led to a contradictory narrative within colonial discourse concerning the impact of the reserves policy on the pastoral economy of the region. The local authorities became well aware of the fact that the loss of pastures and water resources, particularly in a drought situation, would inevitably lead to overstocking.¹⁰⁷ The concerns about animal diseases and the enforcement of a specific spatial structure in Kaoko was a goal, however, which Hahn in particular was not prepared to abandon, at least in terms of policy and administration.

¹⁰⁴ NAN NAO 018, Monthly and annual reports, NC Owamboland, OC Native Affairs, Ondagua, Annual report 1927, 21.1.1928, p. 17.

¹⁰⁵ Their number was much higher, as the miscalculations in southern Kaoko showed just a year later.

¹⁰⁶ NAN PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondangua, Sergeant Hillebrand to OC native affairs, Hahn, 1.5.1928.

¹⁰⁷ NAN SWAA 1168 A 158/40, Sergeant Erasmus, police Kamanjab, to Magistrate Outjo, 25.10.1929; NAN PTJ 1 4/r, monthly reports Ondangua, Sergeant Hillebrand to OC native affairs, Hahn, June 1929.

Forced by people's resistance against the loss of pastoral resources, Hahn made some concessions and allowed temporary access to pastures and water; however, he did not budge on a political level. By the late 1920s, the control of the borders, both the external ones and those within Kaoko, had become a shared interest between the colonial administration and the incipient political elite, the latter being well aware of how far their rule was predicated on stable territories.¹⁰⁸ Muhona Katiti had allowed temporary police posts to be opened in his area at Epembe and Ehomba in 1926¹⁰⁹ and Vita Tom, in particular, would soon prove to be a reliable and capable partner of the administration, as he possessed the technological and human resources required to supervise movements within and beyond the reserves.¹¹⁰ As a matter of fact, the enforcement of the northern reserves was very much linked to the narrative construction of Vita Tom as the dominant political figure under whose rule the entire Herero population would eventually have to be placed.¹¹¹ The plans for this new political hierarchy remained strongly contested.¹¹²

In the realm of securing and supervising the borders, conflicts among the political elite and between the headmen and their subjects surfaced regularly, increasingly so by 1930, when drought and famine forced people into the cleared zones on the region's margins.¹¹³ Negotiations of the political landscape were in fact not limited to Katiti's and Tom's core areas, but concerned all residential centres facing dramatic demographic shifts. Kaoko Otavi, for example, had received a significant number of people and herds in the mid-1910s¹¹⁴ and again as a consequence of the removals in 1929.¹¹⁵ Besides putting enormous pressure on the sustainability of local resources, the significant increase of people and animals in this part of central Kaoko led to power plays among ambitious rivals,¹¹⁶ and it eventually

¹⁰⁸ Bollig (1998), p. 513.

¹⁰⁹ NAN PTJ 1 4/R, OC native affairs, Hahn, to Secretary for SWA, Ondangua, 28.4.1926.

¹¹⁰ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, 1925–30, Magistrate Outjo to NC Windhoek, 9.4.1927.

¹¹¹ NAN SWAA 1168 A 158/40, OC native affairs, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Ondangua, 23.11.1929; NAN NAO 018, monthly and annual reports, 1924–30, OC native affairs, Hahn, Annual report 1929, Ondangua, 14.12.1929, p. 15.

¹¹² NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, 1925–30, OC native affairs, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, re: Kaokoveld Hereros, Ondangua, 20.9.1930.

¹¹³ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, 1925–30, Magistrate Outjo to NC Windhoek, 9.4.1927; NAN NAO 028, OC native affairs, Hahn, to NC Windhoek, Ondangua, 3.5.1928. On the famine 1931 see NAN PTJ 1 7/F, Famine 1931. We'll come back to people's responses to the headmen's control of mobility in chapter 3.5.

¹¹⁴ See chapter 3 Part II on the immigrations from Angola and people's settlement at Kaoko Otavi.

¹¹⁵ See above chapter 3.2.

¹¹⁶ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 3, Statement given by Langman Tjihahurua, recorded by Sergeant Cogill, Otjitundua, 14.9.1932.

instigated a dramatic political transformation in the 1930s which was felt throughout the entire region.¹¹⁷

The problems and resistance that plagued the colonial interventions required Hahn to legitimise the reserves policy in Kaoko by resorting to tribal customs. In a report to the secretary for South West Africa entitled "Native tribal system of land tenure in Owamboland" of 1929, he dedicated a short section to Kaoko:

The chiefs in the Kaokoveld have been allotted reserves by the Administration in which they and their subjects reside. The areas occupied by these reserves have been the ancestral homes of the Kaokoveld Hereros, Ovahimbas and Ovatjimbas for very many years.// The chiefs are responsible for the good order and government of the reserves are therefore looked upon to allot places of residence to the natives and grazing lands for their stock. These people are nomads and move about from place to place in search of new pasture for their herds. They have certain fixed abodes or headquarters however to which they return during the rainy months when they do a little cultivation. The chiefs or natives in charge of the reserves do not exact any payment for any land assigned to their subjects. They are free to come and go when they like, but once within the reserve, they are subject to the orders of the chief who in turn is subject to the instructions of the officials of the Administration under whose jurisdiction the reserves fall. // There are many Ovahimba and Ovatjimba families resident in the Kaokoveld outside the reserves. They live under similar conditions but fall directly under the offices of the Administration. Lately, however, the reserve chiefs have been exercising some authority over them as well to assist this office in administrative work. There are no laws in the Kaokoveld pertaining to land tenure. The Hereros live in villages, generally comprising several families, the right of occupation of which can be said to be permanent.¹¹⁸

Hahn's argument was sophisticated and aimed at cushioning the continuous ambiguities and tensions. Indirect rule required the authorities to account for local political and social systems, but the commissioner's claim that the reserves corresponded to ancestral land purposely ignored that their location was in those parts of Kaoko, which would never have been considered for European settlement. Hahn was aware of the contestations and subversions of political leadership as it had been modelled by the South African government since the late 1910s, and his description of chiefly power, particularly with regard to the allocation of residential rights and access to pastures, fell short of adequately representing existing conditions. Nevertheless, the report preached an almost hesitant and conciliatory policy in Kaoko and did not flinch from declaring residence within the reserves to be a question of free will. The instance that many families and households remained outside the designated areas

¹¹⁷ See Part IV.

¹¹⁸ NAN NAO 09 2/12, Tribal Customs, OC native affairs to the Secretary for SWA, Ondangwa, 17.12.1929.

under the headmen's rule was less a question of hazard, or of pending resettlement, than a symptom of the weakness and ambivalence of both colonial rule and the headmen's power. Indeed in his annual report on administration in the northern territories for 1934, Hahn was forced to correct the census of 1927 significantly. While the numbers given for people residing inside the three northern reserves remained exactly the same,¹¹⁹ the figure for those residing beyond doubled and reached 3036 people.¹²⁰ But still, in view of the measures the administration had applied in southern Kaoko, the commissioner's report clearly showed how cynical colonial rule in the north-west had become under Hahn's aegis.

The chronology of South African rule in Namibia has been subject to debate, and while there were shared and parallel developments throughout the colony, differentiations in terms of time and space, and with regard to the various realms in which the colonial state tried to constitute itself and to impose its policies, continue to be an important concern within Namibian historiography.¹²¹ While a series of colonial legislation, which aimed at controlling African mobility and residence, was passed in the mid-1920s, its application in the northern territories was a cumbersome process largely determined by the nature of colonial interests in the respective areas and by socio-political conditions on the ground. The repertoire of South African rule in Kaoko in the 1920s included a conglomerate of measures and policies. As we saw, indirect rule required reliable political partners and stable territorial structures epitomized in the model of discrete reserves, with strong headmen ruling over an enumerable number of subjects. But this allegedly conciliatory or cooperative concept was always linked to a system of police supervision which included compulsory and, if necessary, violent enforcement of colonial interests and policies. As we shall see, throughout the 1930s securing the borders of the reserves and the cleared zones would increasingly be done by force, and the response by African pastoralists who faced the collapse of their socio-economic livelihoods became vehement at times. While it has been argued elsewhere that pass laws and legislation curtailing or preventing the movement of people and stock within and beyond the reserves initiated a process of economic and social decay in north-western Namibia by the 1920s,¹²² we have yet to critically investigate the application of

¹¹⁹ Counting individuals and animals, i.e. population statistics, was an important aspect of colonial administration, as it sustained and evidenced the alleged expertise, competence and credibility of the state bodies. The weakness of statistical data on Kaoko from 1927 up to the late 1930s was symptomatic of the brittleness of colonial rule in the region. On statistics and colonialism see Pels, P. (1997), *The Anthropology of Colonialism: Culture, History, and the Emergence of Western Governmentality. Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 26: 163–183, here pp. 175ff.

¹²⁰ NAN NAO 019, monthly and annual reports, NC Owamboland, 1932–36, OC native affairs, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Annual report 1934, Ondangua, 4.1.1935.

¹²¹ Silvester et al (1998), where this point is raised repeatedly.

¹²² Bollig (1998b).

laws, the control of human and stock mobility, the sanctioning of individual and collective deeds, and the chronologies of colonial rule in Kaoko. It was not surprising therefore that in all annual reports commissioner Hahn sent to Windhoek to account for the development of the northern administration in Kaoko, information on laws, taxes as well as numerous other criteria, such as labour, passes and vital statistics, remained nil between 1927 and 1936.¹²³ On the contrary, the lack of information in the colonial archives eventually refers to the discontinuities and fractures in a colonial society which, up to the mid-1930s, was still very much in the making.

To conclude: the enforcement of reserves in Kaoko was a process involving the demarcation and implementation of external boundaries as well as the transformation of spatial structures within the region. While in 1923 the South African reserves policy in the north-west had been a theoretical plan, by the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s the colonial administration would gradually intensify its efforts to create corresponding realities on the ground. As we shall see, the policy of concentrating people and stock in a number of confined and comparatively small areas within Kaoko did affect social and economic life significantly, although policy implementation remained incoherent. Yet, before turning our attention to the repercussions the enforcement of reserves had on the region's further development, we will consider the transformation of Kaoko in the 1920s and 1930s from a broader Namibian perspective. In fact, the removals in southern Kaoko in 1929 were part and parcel of a colonial scheme intended to redesign conditions in the colony as a whole. The establishment of a cleared or neutral zone in southern Kaoko marked the beginning of a process of division and separation affecting the entire northern area of the territory. As we shall see, the historiography concerned with South African intervention in the north-west between 1923 and the late 1930s has not considered the wider context of the removals and has accordingly failed to explain the reserves policy in terms of its multiple consequences and implications. The importance of the colonial narrative regarding eventual European settlement in those areas of Kaoko considered suitable for settlers, in terms of natural resources and climatically, has repeatedly been referred to. Since the very beginning of South African rule, southern Kaoko suited the requirements of a settler agricultural economy, which gradually developed its peculiar expansionist dynamics and territorial claims in the north-western part of the territory by the early 1920s, although these remained modest compared to the scale they would reach in central Namibia.¹²⁴

¹²³ NAN NAO 019, monthly and annual reports, 1924–30 and vol. 2, 1932–36.

¹²⁴ Silvester et al (1998), p. 18.

4. The north-western reserves within a Namibian perspective

Post-colonial debates on Kaoko, both public and those within scholarly work, have presented the region and, in particular, its Ovahimba population as one of the last remnants of traditional African culture and of unchanged pastoral modes of production.¹²⁵ Concerned with a critique of the ideological paradigm of a preserved and conservative African pastoral society, the anthropologist Michael Bollig strongly argues for a historical evaluation and explanation accounting for the importance of colonialism in creating and enforcing conditions which hampered economic development and social change.¹²⁶ Bollig has thus introduced the thesis of the colonial encapsulation of the north-western pastoral economy and has identified various factors, such as the border policy, regulations hampering trade, inoculation campaigns and state-controlled labour recruitment¹²⁷ which, throughout the 20th century, affected the economic landscape of Kaoko and eventually led to the structural marginalisation of the region's inhabitants and their livelihood.¹²⁸ Of particular interest for our purpose here is Bollig's explanation of the removals from southern Kaoko in 1929. The official narrative on stock disease is convincing in its argument on the necessity of protecting herds inside the Police Zone from infection. The author then suggests that the colonial authorities almost invented an artificial argument, which would enable them to legitimize the forced dislocation of more than 1200 people and their animals,¹²⁹ but his conclusion remains questionable. The more so, if the veterinarian paradigm expressed in the concerns about stock diseases and their uncontrolled spread were linked, as we shall see, to the broader spatial implications of the northern policy of disease management. Let us first scrutinize Bollig's argument about the economic function and aim of the removals and the creation of a neutral zone in southern Kaoko. The historiography on southern and central Namibia has shown how the South African agricultural policy of the 1920s aimed at strengthening a weak European settler community to the disadvantage of strong African pastoralist societies.¹³⁰ Bollig's argument claims that the state promoted both the financial and infrastructural privileging of the commercial agricultural sector in the north-western area. Consequently, in his view, the separation of the settler economy in the Outjo district from the African pastoralist economy in southern Kaoko primarily aimed at two things:

¹²⁵ Miescher, G. & Rizzo, L. (1999), Popular pictorial constructions of Kaoko in the 20th century: Continuities and Discontinuities. www.museums.org.za/sam/conf/enc/rizzo.htm.

¹²⁶ Bollig (1998b).

¹²⁷ We'll come back to these issues in chapter 3.5. and, with regard to inoculation campaigns, in Part V below.

¹²⁸ Bollig (1998b), p. 507.

¹²⁹ Bollig (1998b), p. 511.

¹³⁰ Werner (1998), p. 90; Silvester (1998), p. 113.

first, undermining the competition and rivalry between the two, and second, it was intended to support a community of poor European and Boer farmers who had taken up their farms in the 1920s, when the economy began to feel the effects of the world-wide recession.¹³¹ The removal of the communities in southern Kaoko thus eventually led to their being cut off from the networks of an economic system in the north-western district, and eventually to preventing their access to trade within the larger colonial markets for stock. All these considerations hold their validity in terms of a policy and process of encapsulation, which undoubtedly did affect the region. Yet, the questions of chronology, i.e. when these developments occurred and the ways in which we should frame the constellations of actors and their various economic positions remain issues of debate.

4.1. Pressures on the north-western pastoral economy

It goes without saying that the enforcement of reserves and consequent demarcation of borders and cleared zones affected the mobility of people and animals. However, linking the policy of encapsulation to the territorial transformation of Kaoko throughout the 1920s might prove fruitless in terms of an analytical interpretation of the region's history. The establishment of the external and internal borders went hand in hand with the shaving away of the outer edges¹³² and, at times, entire zones of the territories. These interventions most significantly changed the accessibility and availability of pastures and water resources. But as I will argue further on, the reserves policy of the 1920s was most acutely felt within the realm of subsistence, and not in terms of a collapse or a prevention of access to large scale trade systems and markets. Indeed, if we consider Kaoko's history between the late 19th century and the early 20th century, the transformations in the realm of commercial trade with stock and with large stock in particular had taken place before the colonial administration launched its reserves and border policy in the 1920s. The disintegration of Kaoko's influence on transregional markets and the closure of channels which guaranteed the African pastoralists' involvement in stock trading was linked, as has been shown, to two historical breaks – the rinderpest pandemic in 1897, which destroyed the material basis of the expansionist economies of the 1880s and 1890s, and the colonial war of 1904–7, in the immediate aftermath of which ownership and circulation of large stock had become almost impossible, both in central and in north-western Namibia.¹³³ While throughout the two first decades of the 20th century the pastoral economies in the north-west recovered gradually, the repastoralisation remained fragile and was based on alternative networks, linking Ka-

¹³¹ Bollig (1998b), p. 512.

¹³² Silvester et al (1998), p. 18. The authors make this point in general for northern Namibia.

¹³³ See Part I.

oko with its eastern and northern neighbours. But the attenuation of trade persisted and the economic stagnation could not be sufficiently cushioned by the immigrations from Angola in the mid-1910s, although some immigrants possessed large herds of cattle. Consequently, by the late 1920s the region was far from enjoying possibilities of stock accumulation, which would have allowed for large-scale transregional business with cattle. Although colonial statistics from the period, particularly the ones on livestock numbers in the northern areas, have to be read with caution, it is worth comparing African stock ownership in north-western and central Namibia. In his annual report for 1929, Hahn included a census of stock owned by pastoralists in Kaoko. A population of 3949 men and women was said to own an estimated 19'597 head of large stock, and 38'876 head of small stock.¹³⁴ Hence, an average individual person in Kaoko would have been the owner of 4.9 head of cattle and 9.8 head of small stock, if social stratification and gendered access to stock is ignored, and the census indeed failed to make any comment on the social distribution of herds. Similar statistical data was collected for the central Namibian reserves in the late 1920s and Werner has discussed figures for the Herero reserves in detail.¹³⁵ The Aminuis reserve, for example, which had a high stock population in the late 1920s, was said to be home to 12'297 head of cattle and 25'826 head of small stock. These animals were owned by a population of 669 individuals. Average stock ownership in Aminuis was therefore almost four times higher than in Kaoko, and would have been at least twice as high in the smaller Herero reserves in central Namibia, such as Ovitoto and Epukiro.

Considering the relative weakness of the African pastoral economy in the north-west in the late 1920s, the removals from southern Kaoko did not aim at resolving the rivalry between the settlers and their African northern neighbours in terms of access to the southern stock markets. Furthermore, the ownership structure existing in the district's livestock economy had become rather uneven by then. According to the agricultural censuses done in the Outjo and Fransfontein areas since the mid-1920s, differences in average livestock owned by Europeans and Africans had steadily increased.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ NAN NAO 018, Monthly & Annual Reports, 1924–30, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Annual report 1929, Ondangua, 14.12.1929, p 17.

¹³⁵ Werner (1998), pp. 151ff.

¹³⁶ In 1924 e.g. stock ownership in the Fransfontein area was as follows: 67 Africans were identified as owners of 1012 sheep, 4473 goats, 551 head of large stock and 21 donkeys, while seven European farmers owned 6559 sheep, 1126 goats, 1573 head of cattle, 15 horses and 13 donkeys. See NAN AGV 200 V5 8/21, Livestock and Agricultural Census for 1924. In 1935 the same area showed a similar situation: 92 Africans owned 639 sheep, 4547 goats, 3746 head of cattle, 81 horses and 215 donkeys, while 40 European farmers owned 16 487 sheep, 1784 goats and more than 6000 head of large stock. See NAN AGV 200 V3, Livestock and Agricultural Census for 1935.

The situation in the Outjo district was indeed complex, and the links between various economic agents were multiple, depending on the aim and scale of exchange relations, rather than being determined by the ideological differences between European and African socio-economic life, as argued by the administration. In his critique of Bollig's argument, Giorgio Miescher has rightly questioned the portrayal of the settler community in the Outjo district in the 1920s in terms of the poor whites debate, i.e. the colonial preoccupation with those farmers in the South African colony who struggled to survive in an agricultural sector increasingly threatened by the structural economic crisis.¹³⁷ The few Boer settlers who left Angola in early 1920 and settled in the area of Outjo all owned the capital to buy land and possessed sufficient livestock to start their new farming enterprises.¹³⁸ Still, the farmers who had petitioned the colonial government in the mid-1920s urged the administration to create a cleared zone. This group consisted predominantly of German-speaking members who had lived in the district for decades. Most prominently included amongst their number was Carl Schlettwein. While there were differences among them in terms of capital resources, land property and economic diversification,¹³⁹ the reason for the settlers' initiative had not been the wish to get rid of their African rivals. Since the early 20th century, the north-western district had seen the emergence of an economic system peculiar to the colonial periphery, where European and African farmers had shared common interests in pastoralism, trade and smuggling,¹⁴⁰ and where both had a share in revenues. By the mid-1920s, the new regulations on the colonial stock market increased the pressure on the settlers to make a choice – abandon their see-saw relationship between the Police Zone and the areas beyond and opt for unambiguous inclusion into the core economy of the colony. The main criterion for their successful participation in the formal stock markets was, as suggested earlier, the quality and health of their cattle. The veterinarian argument, which increasingly determined colonial narratives in the north-western area, was far from being mere rhetoric covering up the ideological and political interests of an expanding colonial state. The alliance between the farmers, the Windhoek based veterinarians and the colonial authorities in the capital emerged out of the need to secure the sustainability of the colony's participation in the international livestock market, and South African guidelines concerning cattle disease and

¹³⁷ See Miescher (2009), chapter 4, p. 192. The term "poor whites" mainly refers to the group of undercapitalised South African farmers settling in Namibia from 1915 onwards.

¹³⁸ Kruger (n.d.), p. 28. The immigration of Boers from Angola in the early 1920s is different from the state orchestrated immigration of Angola Boers in 1928. These immigrants settled all over colonial Namibia and were economically much weaker.

¹³⁹ Kruger (n.d.), pp. 27–28, where the author lists the names of the farmers and their farms. E.g. the Krenz family or Mrs Kühle, who managed her farm on her own, lacked the economic strength of Schlettwein or former members of the colonial administration, such as von Wangenheim.

¹⁴⁰ See chapter 2.2.2. Part II.

their control left no leeway whatsoever.¹⁴¹ It was the veterinarian argument referring to the significance of the removals and creation of a cleared zone in southern Kaoko in 1929 for a broader process, which aimed at creating clear and unproblematic constellations in the north for good. While the archival material relating to Kaoko tends to inscribe the removals into a policy attuned to the region's peculiarities and requirements, the very same archive includes scattered, but no less significant, references to the transregional scheme. Indeed, commissioner Hahn's request to simply extend the southern border of Owambo and draw the line westwards thereby fixing the northern border of the cleared zone along the 19° latitude was an expression of precisely that colonial grand plan of dividing the colony into a northern, i.e. infected, and a southern, i.e. healthy cattle area.

4.2. Southern Kaoko and the separation of the northern areas from the Police Zone

Let us come back to the veterinarian argument, which had increasingly gained importance in the official documentation and narratives on Kaoko in the 1920s, and sketch the context in which stock disease and the prevention of its spread throughout the colony became the central concern of the colonial administration. As we saw earlier on, lungsickness stood at the centre of attention and led to the second removal in southern Kaoko in 1930 and to the first inoculation campaign by veterinary Schmid.¹⁴² Concerns with the disease had come to the fore immediately after South Africa took over colonial rule in Namibia when, in 1915, the first cases of lungsickness were reported in the northern areas and in the district of Outjo.¹⁴³ While the closing of Owambo to trade in 1916 was the first administrative measure to control the circulation of stock between the north and the Police Zone,¹⁴⁴ the colonial regulations did not at this point affect Kaoko significantly.¹⁴⁵ Yet, with the granting of the Mandate in 1921, South African policies became tighter and due to the threats posed by lungsickness spreading southward, the colonial government decided to prohibit any cattle exports from the northern districts of Grootfontein and Outjo to the south, i.e. to the Police Zone and to South Africa.¹⁴⁶ Most northern police posts, which had been charged with controlling the Police Zone border in German colonial time, lost significance in the early

¹⁴¹ Miescher (2009), chapter 4, p. 192.

¹⁴² See above chapter 3.2.

¹⁴³ My argument follows Giorgio Miescher's work on the history of the Red Line, i.e. the genesis of the border dividing the commercial farming area from the northern Namibian territories. Miescher (2009), p. 172.

¹⁴⁴ Any movement of stock would henceforth require a permit.

¹⁴⁵ While the administration opted for a hesitant policy, i.e. not to create incentives for trade with Kaoko, stock exchanges remained possible as long as quarantine regulations were respected.

¹⁴⁶ Miescher (2009), chapter 3, p. 172.

period of South African rule and many were in fact unoccupied up to the mid-1920s. The weak police presence made it impossible to control the mobility of herds and had led the veterinarians charged with preventing the spread of diseases to use the northern districts as a buffer between the core area of the colonial economy, i.e. southern and central Namibia, and the northern territories. The closing of the district led to highly unfavourable conditions for the agricultural sector in the area, as it meant a *de facto* exclusion of the European farmers in the Outjo district from the southern stock markets. Not surprisingly, settler inflows into the north-western area remained almost non-existent in the early 1920s.¹⁴⁷ In view of the restrictions they faced, the farmers in Outjo tried to open Angola as a market for their stock, but it was difficult to secure government permission to take more than 1000 head of cattle through Kaoko into the Portuguese colony in order to be sold there.¹⁴⁸ This situation was unsustainable in the long run. The initiative by the Outjo-based farmers association to launch the idea of a cleared zone in southern Kaoko in the mid-1920s followed the logic and requirements of an increased concern with animal health and the significance of this for access to the national and international livestock market. As we saw, the idea of a stock-free zone was welcomed by both the veterinarians and the authorities in Windhoek and, in 1924, the colonial government re-occupied all northern police posts and lifted the ban on the northern districts, i.e. on those parts of the Grootfontein and Outjo districts, which lay inside the Police Zone.¹⁴⁹ By doing so and eventually by enforcing the cleared zone in southern Kaoko in 1929,¹⁵⁰ the farmers in Outjo, backed by the central bodies of the colonial administration, eventually managed to prevent the northern districts from playing the role of buffers in the long run.¹⁵¹

As discussed above, the establishment of the neutral zone led first of all to the removal of numerous households and herds, in particular it limited African pastoralists from gaining access to grazing lands and water resources. The settlers, although they had used southern Kaoko regularly in order to gain additional grazing for their herds, did not significantly feel any effects of the closure over the long term, particularly because they were included in the Police Zone and hence their integration into the formal agricultural sector raised hopes of financial, infrastructural and, not least, veterinarian support by the colonial government. Needless to say, the cleared zone in southern Kaoko brought changes affecting the farming economies in the area, both African and European. The prohibition of any movement of

¹⁴⁷ Kruger (n.d.), p. 28.

¹⁴⁸ Miescher (2009), p. 173.

¹⁴⁹ Miescher (2009), p. 238. The formal end of the blocking of the northern districts was done by *Government Notice 94 of 1924*.

¹⁵⁰ Based on *Prohibited Areas Proclamation of 1928*.

¹⁵¹ Miescher (2009), p. 139.

cattle from the Police Zone into Kaoko and vice versa created conditions, which were disadvantageous for small-scale trade between settlers and African pastoralists, as threats of cattle confiscations and shootings proved an effective means of determent. Not all transactions and cooperation were cut off, but the products and patterns of trade and business shifted. Small stock rapidly became the main trade item and, for Africans in particular, a currency enabling them to access imported products and various services.¹⁵² Both settlers and the administration, however, remained ambivalent since the quality of cattle in Kaoko, still acknowledged by veterinary Schmid in 1930, increased the attractiveness of the northern herds and hence the risk of smuggling remained serious.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, concerns about the prevention of the spread of diseases circumscribed interests in breed improvement and gave way to the colonial disentanglement of the regional economy. Eventually, the neutral zone in southern Kaoko, regardless of the fact that its supervision had soon proven to be an almost unmanageable task for the colonial officers based in the region, and that it had failed to prove its efficacy in terms of disease prevention, became the model on which the South African administration would base its future policy. Up to the early 1930s, and particularly in the mid-1930s when foot and mouth disease became a serious threat to the national live-stock economy, the colonial government gradually extended the buffer zone eastwards up to the Grootfontein district. By 1935, the administration launched the systematic separation of stock in the northern areas of Kaoko, Owambo and Kavango from those in central and southern Namibia, i.e. inside the Police Zone.¹⁵⁴ Hand in hand with this radical division, the narrative of a clean colonial heartland, to be protected from the infected northern “native” areas, gained ground and would determine the political and administrative approach of the colonial state towards the northern African pastoral economies for decades to come. As we shall see, the system of borders and buffers emerging in the 1930s laid the ground for a new wave of South African colonial intervention in the north and north-west, epitomized in a series of rigid inoculation campaigns.¹⁵⁵

5. Fractured colonial administration – mobility and containment

The archival narrative on Kaoko between 1926 and 1935 is shaped by the logic of border demarcations and enforcements as well as the creation of cleared zones. As we saw above,

¹⁵² We have referred to the payment with small stock for church services by the Rhenish Mission Society earlier on. Also see Miescher (2009), p. 205.

¹⁵³ Miescher (2009), p. 204. This was also true for stock from Owambo.

¹⁵⁴ Miescher (2009), p. 221.

¹⁵⁵ We'll come back in more detail to the inoculation campaigns and the transformation of the pastoral economy in north-western Namibia in the late 1930s in Part V below.

the implementation of a specific colonial spatial structure, which intended to constitute Kaoko as a contingent territory and divide its population along tribal lines, shaped the South African policy in the region. These measures, and particularly the removals of people and herds out of southern Kaoko in 1929, aimed less at protecting the interests of the settler economy in the Outjo district from their northern African rivals. Privileging the settlers on the national and international livestock market, as it was systematically done in southern and central Namibia, was not as important in the north-west. Rather, the concern with animal disease, and hence the veterinarian argument and corresponding strategies to prevent the southward spread of lung sickness became the main driving force for both the Outjo settlers' mobilization and the colonial government's policy. Still, South African plans in Kaoko and their implementation remained fractured, and the archives provide evidence for the problems and constraints faced by policemen and veterinarians as they tried to supervise and control the mobility of people and herds for disease management. The borders and buffers remained theoretical models in many instances. Yet, as we shall see, although the implementation of the colonial spatial scheme was a cumbersome and discontinuous process, by the mid-1930s its influence began to be felt in the region, affecting the economic as well as the socio-political realms.

In contrast to the colonial archives, oral information referring to the 1920s and 1930s is hesitant with regard to the South African border policy. While the removals of 1929 are an issue in narratives from southern and central Namibia,¹⁵⁶ they are mentioned far less in the accounts from the northern parts of the region.¹⁵⁷ What is remembered throughout Kaoko is the drought period and famine in the early 1930s and ongoing friction with political leaders, who continued to influence the means and parameters of their rule under colonialism. Let us then explore some of the repercussions the borders and the enforcement of the reserves had on Kaoko's society.

5.1. Controlling the mobility of herds and of people

The removals of 1929 and the closing of water places and pastures along the Kunene River and in the border area with Owambo led to the concentration of people and herds and eventually created a disastrous situation characterised by overstocking and the unsustainable use of natural resources. In 1933 missionary Wilhelm Neumeister, who had managed to reanimate contacts with the Sesfontein community after a long period of missionary ab-

¹⁵⁶ The chronologies in oral reconstructions of the past became more stable around key issues and events, such as big dislocations and droughts.

¹⁵⁷ Oral traditions collected by Michael Bollig in northern Kaoko and published in an edited volume do not consider the removals of 1929. See Bollig (1997).

sence, noted that many pastoralists had left the area without being in a position to explain the causes for the drop in population numbers.¹⁵⁸ Sesfontein had indeed been cut off from its southern extensions and the survival of herds eventually compelled many households to leave their place of residence temporarily in search of new pastures.¹⁵⁹ The dispersal of people who were forced to enlarge the radius of their pastoral migration was by far a phenomenon limited to southern Kaoko.¹⁶⁰ Since the beginnings of his charge as northern native commissioner, Hahn had repeatedly praised the uncontested ability of Herero communities to successfully adapt their pastoral economy to the harshness of the landscape and climate in the colony, an instance which had induced Hahn to consider Kaoko far more industrious and promising compared to what he had allegedly observed in Owambo.¹⁶¹ Yet, ironically, by the early 1930s the commissioner's appreciation of the high mobility that had characterised the north-western region's pastoral economy had changed into open resentment and eventually resulted in Hahn envisaging measures to force Kaoko's population to become as settled as possible.¹⁶²

But against all odds, and contrary to the colonial intention to contain Kaoko's inhabitants within the reserves, it was precisely the reserves and border policy that had led to an intensification of movements within the region. This was increasingly so as the drought situation culminated in famine in 1931.

5.1.1. The famine of 1931

As mentioned above, the drought of the late 1920s affected large parts of the northern areas in colonial Namibia and most of the African population faced a dramatic collapse of food production and consumption. There were, however, discontinuities and differences in the scale and distribution of famine throughout the northern territories. Patricia Hayes

¹⁵⁸ ELCRN V 27, Gemeinde-Chronik der Missionstation Outjo, D.S.W. Afrika, 1904–1967, notes for the year 1930.

¹⁵⁹ Interviewees in Sesfontein could identify various cattle posts and trajectories of herds which were cut off by the establishment of the southern neutral zone in 1929. E.g. interview with August Kasaona, Otjindagwe/Sesfontein, 20.12.2001. Most families who left Sesfontein in the late 1920s and early 1930s returned to the place in 1937.

¹⁶⁰ See e.g. NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, 1925–30, SWA Police Tshimhaka to NC Owamboland, 20.10.1930. The area of Kaoko Otavi in the central portion of Kaoko saw similar developments, interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Ojette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002.

¹⁶¹ NAN NAO 18, monthly & annual reports, 1924–30. E.g. OC Native Affairs Ondagua to the Secretary for SWA, Annual report 1928, 12.12.1928, "Like Owamboland the general conditions in regard to grazing and water have been very severe particularly in the northern parts. Even the Herero speaking natives who understand better than any others in this country the art of cattle rearing and succeed where for instance the Owambos would fail, have suffered considerably", p. 16 & 17.

¹⁶² NAN NAO Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, handwritten notes, n.d., pp. 6–7.

has repeatedly referred to the dynamics in the experience of and response to drought and starvation. In her study of famine in Owambo between 1929 and 1930 she describes how the food crisis in the north gradually moved from east to west and while it appeared to have ended in the east in 1931, the famine continued in the western part of Owambo until at least 1933.¹⁶³ Differences also reflected famine interventions chosen by the colonial administration, including a relief scheme in Ondonga and Kwanyama with serious consequences, while South African intervention remained marginal in the west. The famine relief programme launched in 1929, which consisted of a food-for-dam work exchange scheme and mainly involved women and children as relief workers, became, as Hayes convincingly shows, an assertive moment in the formation and constitution of a colonial state, which had up till then failed to impose its policy of indirect rule.¹⁶⁴ Correspondingly, archival source material on the “famine of the dams” is unusually dense and the period marked the emergence of a constellation in which women in Owambo entered the colonial public arena in unprecedented ways.¹⁶⁵

For Kaoko, the implications of the famine of 1931 were glaringly different in terms of colonial intervention, yet there were, as we shall see, shared experiences and correlations with regard to local responses and strategies for countering the crisis. In the colonial archives sources relating to the food crisis of 1931 are but few, and concentrate almost exclusively on trade over the northern Kunene border aimed at mitigating the food shortage in the region. In October 1930, the police at Tshimhaka still had to accommodate the Portuguese authorities’ refusal to allow stock into Angolan territory. Hence, the South African administration urged the headmen in Kaoko to barter in grain and make sure that they had the cash required to pay for it.¹⁶⁶ Yet, already in early November of the same year, two lusophone traders were granted permission to import 500 heifers from Kaoko, and exchange rates were fixed at two bags of grain per heifer.¹⁶⁷ Trading in emergency grain had been a strategy increasingly relied upon during drought periods in the 1920s. In 1926 and again in 1930, 285 bags of maize had been bartered into Kaoko, partly paid for by local pastoralists in cash or exchanged for heifers.¹⁶⁸ But with the Portuguese authorities increasingly ham-

¹⁶³ Hayes, P. (1998a), The ‘Famine of the Dams’. Gender, Labour and Politics in Ovamboland, 1929–30. In Hayes et al, pp. 117–146, here p. 126.

¹⁶⁴ Hayes (1998a), p. 141.

¹⁶⁵ Hayes (1998a), pp.17 & 18.

¹⁶⁶ NAN PTJ 1 7/F, Famine 1931, OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, to Police Tshimhaka, 21.10.1930.

¹⁶⁷ NAN PTJ 1 7/F, Famine 1931, du Buisson, Police Tshimhaka, to Oc Native Affairs Ondangua, 3.11.1930. Exchange rates were hence better as the on the northern border in Owambo, where heifers eventually went for one bag of grain. Hayes (1998a), p. 129.

¹⁶⁸ Bollig (1998b) p. 519. One bag of grain was 90 kilograms. For 1930 see NAN PTJ 1 4/R, Monthly

pering and eventually prohibiting the import of stock from north-western Namibia to their territory, trade became a cumbersome, bureaucratic process – a situation that persisted up until 1932, when Kaoko's headmen required commissioner Hahn to apply for permission to barter grain with Portuguese traders anew.¹⁶⁹

In contrast to the almost systematic absence of the famine in Kaoko in the colonial sources, droughts and famines, including the period of crisis between 1929 and 1932, figure prominently in oral narratives from the north-western region, and some accounts dramatically sketch how the lack of food hit the most vulnerable members of society:

Since that time the rains did not come, the rains did not rain, they did not rain and it became a drought, from autumn until summer until winter no rain. In this year the famine began, the hunger commenced. A child that lived under good conditions was the child of a rich man. The child of a poor man, somebody like me, ate the hide(s) that we slept on, we Ovahimba, that hide stained with dirt that we slept on, that one with residues of fat and the dirt of people. Those children they were cutting, those children of poor people they were cutting them, they were cutting them with the help of others and put them on fires. (...) Those burnt residues that is what the children were living off.¹⁷⁰

While the colonial administration was mainly concerned with regulating the emergency barter over the northern border, the import of grain was but one strategy within a diversified repertoire of responding to and countering the famine. Exchange relations within and beyond Kaoko became of utmost importance in people's attempts to secure subsistence and survival, and strategies employed to barter food became more and more extensive.¹⁷¹ As we saw before, local representatives of the communities had repeatedly raised issues of overstocking and threats to subsistence due to the clearing of water places and pastures throughout Kaoko, limitations that had dramatically aggravated the ecological distress in 1929 and 1930. Applications to sell stock¹⁷² and increasingly the necessity to slaughter animals¹⁷³ no

reports Ondonga, 1926–31, du Buisson to OC Native affairs, Hahn, 31.12.1930. In this case 151 bags out of the 285 were exchanged for heifers, 116 were sold for cash and 18 bags remained to be paid.

¹⁶⁹ NAN NAO 02, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Ondagua, 24.6.1932.

¹⁷⁰ Tjambiru Tjikumbamba in Bollig (1997), p. 273. Several of the interviews edited in Bollig's volume recount drought periods throughout the 20th century.

¹⁷¹ A point stressed by women in particular, interview with Maririro Koviti Tjihurura, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002 and with Kuairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002.

¹⁷² Exchange networks between stock owners in Kaoko and in the Waterberg reserves are a case documented. Indeed, in 1934 pastoralists in Kaoko began to buy in stock from their Waterberg partners. See NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, Vol 2, Magistrate Otjiwarongo to NC Ovamboland, 1.6.1934.

¹⁷³ Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002, see also Vahikura Kapika in

doubt reflected the pastoralists' attempts to alleviate pressure on natural resources.¹⁷⁴ Subsidiary activities such as collecting wild food and repeated attempts to increase cultivation were utilized, although the drought kept revenues very small.¹⁷⁵ Crop cultivation became a strategy limited to privileged sites such as Sesfontein¹⁷⁶ and Kaoko Otavi, which had large and strong springs.¹⁷⁷

Regardless of the harshness of conditions in the region and scornful of people's efforts to cope with the famine, by 1932 the colonial lament about Kaoko creating expense to the state without yielding any revenue, intensified. This situation undoubtedly increased the pressure on Hahn, who had to account for the ragged course of the north-western administration.

(...) The chief question of course is the foodshortage in the Kaokoveld. (...) I had already represented matters but the Administration does not feel itself disposed to assist the Kaokoveld natives who (...) merely sit and grow fat and rich on the best posts in the Kaokoveld. If they stored their food in the same way the Owambos do and planted more of it they would not now be in need¹⁷⁸

The cynicism of such assessments by the regional representatives of the colonial state had unfortunately become symptomatic, but the *naïveté* towards the transformation of a society being subjected to colonialism could not have been expressed more clearly. The reserves and border policy and their linkage to the constitution and consolidation of political structures and agents had put serious limits on the freedom of mobility for the entire population. The role of headmen became, once again, highly ambivalent. Their interest in stable territories being imposed on their subjects required their supervision and reporting of any significant movement within their areas of influence. Indeed, Vita Tom and Muhona Katiti in northern Kaoko, but also western Owambo leaders such as King Muala, regularly provided the administration and police with information about "illegal" stock movements and "unauthorised" movement of individuals or entire households.¹⁷⁹ On the other hand, the headmen

Bollig (1997), p. 280.

¹⁷⁴ Hayes (1998a), p. 127.

¹⁷⁵ NAN NAO 018, monthly and annual reports, 1924–30, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Annual report 1929, Ondangua, 14.12.1929; NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, Native Commissioner Ovamboland to the Secretary for SWA, Ondangua, 24.6.1932.

¹⁷⁶ ELCRN, V 27, Gemeinde-Chronik der Missionsstation Outjo, D.S.W. Afrika, 1904–1967, notes for 1932 and 1933, the latter year being marked by locusts destroying significant parts of the harvest.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Solomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002, information given by his sister.

¹⁷⁸ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to Sgt. Cogill, Ondangua, 13.9.1932.

¹⁷⁹ NAN NAO 018, monthly and annual reports, OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, monthly report May & June, 8.7.1932, NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld general, 1925–30,

continued to be part of a social system of obligations and loyalties, centred on the pastoral economy.¹⁸⁰ Vita Tom exemplifies the growing ambiguity of political leadership in Kaoko in the late 1920s. His power was largely based on an extended system of stock loans and patronage that linked him to his followers far beyond the confined borders of his reserve. In line with the reserves scheme, Tom was among the first whom Hahn required to move all his stock inside the territory allotted to him.¹⁸¹ As we shall see, the lower ranks of society would try to counter claims to control by their leadership and the undermining of social cohesion and solidarity, which in a period of drought and famine remained the guarantors for food and stock distribution.¹⁸²

5.1.2. *Transgression, undermining and sanction*

As we saw above, the immediate reaction to the South African reserves and border policy in Kaoko was that pastoralists reasserted their claims to land and natural resources, first in southern Kaoko and then along the northern and eastern borders. Undermining the administration's attempts to establish cleared zones became a strategy of survival, which reflected not least the increasing threats to economic and social security Kaoko's inhabitants faced in the wake of drought and famine. The re-occupation of water places and pastures, which had been closed by the police, involved high risks and cases of herds being confiscated or animals being shot on the spot abound, especially in the second half of the 1930s.¹⁸³ The way the colonial government handled the transgressions in this area was often incoherent and varied from case to case, reflecting the inconsistency and biased nature of their policy in its application. Sanctions against ordinary herders tended to be unreasonably high and usually involved substantial fines in cattle,¹⁸⁴ while cases involving headmen were acquitted with the authorities averring the men's bond to colonial law and order.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, by 1934 adding confiscated cattle to government owned herds in Kaoko had become an almost unremark-

Police Tshimhaka to OC Native Affairs Owamboland, 20.10.1930.

¹⁸⁰ See Comaroff, J. & J. (1990), Goodly beasts, beastly goods: cattle and commodities in a South African context. *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 17, No. 2: 195–216.

¹⁸¹ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld general, 1925–30, Sgt. Hillebrand, Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondagua, 15.2.1928.

¹⁸² Hayes has referred to the decreasing efficiency of these systems of distribution during famine, see Hayes (1998a), p. 127.

¹⁸³ NAN NAO 027 22/1, Tours to Ovamboland, 1926–47, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to CNC Windhoek, Adams, 22.3.1928, NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, 1925–30, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, 5.10.1930. See also Bollig (1998b), p. 516, although archival sources referred to concern the late 1930s, when huge stock destructions happened in northern Kaoko.

¹⁸⁴ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, the Secretary for SWA to OC Native Affairs, Hahn, Windhoek, 21.4.1932, mentioning fines up to 10 head of cattle per individual.

¹⁸⁵ NAN NAO 019, reports 1933 & 1934, Oc Native Affairs Ondangua to the Secretary for SWA, annual report 1934, 4.1.1935.

able routine practice.¹⁸⁶ Similar contradictions concerned the ways the authorities faced the ongoing mobility of people, both within and beyond the borders of Kaoko. While there were occasionally reports on “unauthorised” shifts of people within Kaoko,¹⁸⁷ by the mid-1930s the administration almost unperturbedly continued to note that a substantial part of Kaoko’s population still resided outside the three designated reserves.¹⁸⁸ Obviously the police stationed in Kaoko continued to be overstrained by their duties, and the Tshimhaka officers’ anxieties about being poisoned reflected the perception of their vulnerable position in the area.¹⁸⁹ Discrepancies between the claim to create settled conditions in the north-west, particularly in view of the control of stock disease, and the realities on the ground appeared in 1932, when the authorities in Windhoek temporarily closed the police post in Tshimhaka and decided to withdraw the remaining police officers from Otjitundua.¹⁹⁰ Hahn was desperate to prevent the withdrawal of police forces from the north-west, because Kaoko’s inhabitants continued to show reluctance in cooperating with the authorities.¹⁹¹

The population’s negative responses to the sanctions imposed on their mobility were by far directed towards the police alone. Challenges to political tutelage, and particularly to the political elite’s tendency to misuse the authority vested in them for the illegitimate confiscation and accumulation of stock, increasingly surfaced as individual pastoralists, both men and women, claimed back their animals and enforced their rights to property.¹⁹² The pending collapse of the pastoral economy for vast parts of the region’s society and the post-famine situation led to an increased instability and insecurity of material, social and physical wellbeing.¹⁹³ The social crisis affected women and the youth in particular; a number of

¹⁸⁶ NAN NAO 019, Kaokoveld general, Vol. 3, Sgt. Cogill, Tshimhaka, to Nc Ondangua, Hahn, 23.5.1924. Cogill noted the confiscation of five heifers in northern Kaoko to be added to the Government herds, apparently corresponding to the average number of animals for a month.

¹⁸⁷ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, 1925–30, Police Tshimhaka to Oc Native Affairs Ondangua, 20.10.1930, NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, Police Tshimhaka to OC Native Affairs Ondangua, 20.2.1935 and 3.11.1935. Bollig has referred to the notorious preoccupation of the colonial authorities with movements inside Kaoko, see Bollig (1998b), p. 513. Yet the reported cases in which people were actually prosecuted or fined remained rather limited up to the mid 1930s.

¹⁸⁸ NAN NAO 021, Suspected Persons, 1935–42, Magistrate Outjo to the Secretary for SWA, Outjo, 18.5.1936.

¹⁸⁹ NAN A 450 10 3/5/1, Kaokoveld 1917–45, Du Buisson, Police Tshimhaka, to OC Native Affairs Ondangua, 25.9.1930.

¹⁹⁰ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, NC Owamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Ondangua, 26.2.1932.

¹⁹¹ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, NC Owamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Ondangua, 26.2.1932.

¹⁹² NAN NAO 019, reports 1933 & 1934, OC Native Affairs, Ondangua, to the Secretary for SW Africa, annual report 1934, 4.1.1935.

¹⁹³ Hayes (1998a), p. 141.

cases in which young men and women were killed in the context of disputes over stock property dramatically illustrate the distress and violence triggered by the famine of 1931.¹⁹⁴ But on the other hand, the tilt within society and the emphasis of social hierarchies to the disadvantage of female and young individuals were in some instances countered – and surprisingly, the presence of the colonial representatives in the region could at times offer support.¹⁹⁵ The police in both Kamanjab and Tshimhaka were repeatedly concerned with supporting women and young men, who had been exposed to domestic violence or who were at risk of losing their rights of residence and inheritance.¹⁹⁶ As we shall see, leaving the region became, particularly for women, a strategy of survival, yet one that would face serious opposition, both from within their society as well as from the colonial authorities.

5.2. Trade, dependent work, and participation in the cash economy

The South African reserves policy, in combination with an ongoing drought and severe famine in Kaoko in the late 1920s and early 1930s, created a constellation in which the region's population found it increasingly difficult to obtain a livelihood from the pastoral economy and to cover basic subsistence needs. The economic impact of the crisis varied significantly within the local society, and while wealthy stock owners could resort to their herds for food supply, poorer families were drawn into dependent work relations in the agricultural domain, hiring themselves out as herders or working in fields or gardens,¹⁹⁷ although crop cultivation proved rather unsustainable in vast parts of the region. Economic diversification became a necessity in view of deteriorating ecological conditions. Revitalising fallback activities, such as gathering wild food, was paired with entrance into new realms offered by the colonial economy, and the reorganization of labour, particularly in the colonial realm was, as we shall see, increasingly gendered. By the mid-1930s, it had become almost compulsory for the African communities in Kaoko to engage with the colonial economy in one way or another in order to recover from the famine, but they nevertheless managed to have some say over the terms of their involvement.

¹⁹⁴ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, 1925–30, SWA Police Tshimhaka to NC Owamboland, re murder of Kanjarandwe, 15.10.1930, and the statements taken by Cogill in July and September 1930, du Buisson To NC Owamboland, re alleged murder of late native woman Kaimana, 22.10.1930.

¹⁹⁵ We'll discuss the use of colonial presence as a means to push through individual and collective rights in Part IV.

¹⁹⁶ NAN NAO 026, Miscellaneous, 1916–46, Case of woman Onderangandja versus Kapute ex husband, n.d. (early 1930s); NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, 1925–30, Const. Cogill, minute re Case Rex versus Kawathembwa, 21.1.1931.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 17.12.2001, interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe/Sesfontein, 27.12.2001.

5.2.1. Trade

Trade both within and beyond Kaoko continued to offer revenue,¹⁹⁸ and bartering for emergency grain from southern Angola had shown not least that there was an undisturbed market for large stock from Kaoko in the Portuguese colony. The main motor for livestock trade in the mid-1930s became small stock and, in particular, sheep mainly due to the boom of the Karakul industry in central and southern Namibia.¹⁹⁹ Although the administration had prohibited trade with small stock in 1935 (due to veterinarian concerns), farmers in the Outjo district had a growing interest in buying sheep in Kaoko and petitioned the local authorities for access to the north-west until the colonial government eventually gave in. Quarantine stations and dipping tanks were opened at Otjivazandu and Kamanjab in 1937 and 1938²⁰⁰ and, although the administration claimed to support Kaoko's pastoralists wherever possible,²⁰¹ the trade with sheep is an example of how deeply biased state regulations became, privileging settlers and disadvantaging African entrepreneurs. The trade with small stock was indeed one of the few ways Kaoko's inhabitants could acquire cash.²⁰² By 1937, a number of African stock owners in Kaoko applied for permission to export small stock. These applications constitute the few archival sources on African trade in the period and its ramifications beyond colonial territorialities. In September 1937, for example, Kleophas Hoatekerra, who was residing in the Franzfontein reserve, asked the magistrate in Outjo for permission to export sheep and goats from Ombombo (in southern Kaoko) to the Otjihorongo reserve in central Namibia.²⁰³ The application and the wish to trade stock between the two areas was allowed when the inhabitants of the Otjihorongo reserve applied with the welfare officer from their end, affirming that they were indeed keen to import 508 head of cattle, 3 horses, 6 donkeys, 802 sheep and 526 goats from Kaoko.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁸ Interview with August Kasaona, Otjindagwe/Sesfontein, 20.12.2001, interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 10.1.2002, although interviewees stressed that it was small scale trade.

¹⁹⁹ For the development of the Karakul industry see Werner (1998), pp. 174ff. Bollig (1998b), p. 520. Sheep from Kaoko were bought in for cross-breeding.

²⁰⁰ NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, Senior Veterinary Officer to the Secretary for SWA, Windhoek, 24.10.1936 & Secretary for SWA to Director of Works, Windhoek, 22.7.1938.

²⁰¹ NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, the Secretary for SWA to the Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Windhoek, 27.9.1938.

²⁰² Some interviewees in Sesfontein mentioned, that cash could also be obtained in trade with Owambo, but it was easier in the south, i.e. in the Police Zone. Interview with August Kasaona, Otjindagwe/Sesfontein, 20.12.2001.

²⁰³ NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, Police Franzfontein to Magistrate Outjo, 4.9.1937.

²⁰⁴ NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, Welfare Officer, NR Omaruru, to NC Omaruru, 7.9.1937.

The veterinarian authorities immediately tried to prevent the trade, reminding the regional authorities that control over livestock and animal disease in the north-west was almost non-existent.²⁰⁵ Yet, thanks to the African trade partners' persistence with the authorities, small stock trade was eventually allowed, provided that the herds would pass strict quarantine regulations.²⁰⁶

The general reluctance to allow trade in small stock applied to the settlers as well but in their case the administration was far more inclined to exhaust the regulations and conditions imposed by the veterinarian bodies. Numerous farmers in the Outjo district regularly applied for permission to export sheep and goats from Kaoko and for some this trade had turned into a lucrative business.²⁰⁷ Particularly privileged were those farmers who still occupied farms in southern Kaoko, such as the lessee Oldani on the Schlettwein-owned farm Warmquelle, who was said to regularly barter small stock with people north of the cleared zone and in Sesfontein.²⁰⁸ The Rhenish Mission society also managed to have a share in the business with small stock from Kaoko. Among its representatives, missionaries Neumeister and Werner had come to the authorities' attention by 1937 when they repeatedly applied to export more than 500 sheep from the Sesfontein area.²⁰⁹

Northern Kaoko remained disadvantaged in the business with farmers in the Police Zone, an issue that was acknowledged by commissioner Hahn²¹⁰ and had been referred to in letters from the communities' representatives.²¹¹ In 1934 they had urged Hahn to enable them to access the market for small stock, arguing that it was one of the only means by which they could obtain payment in cash.²¹² In contrast, men such as Vita Tom were prob-

²⁰⁵ NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, Gov. Vet. office to the Senior Veterinary Surgeon, 25.10.1937.

²⁰⁶ NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, the Secretary for SWA to the NC Omaruru, Windhoek, 27.11.1937.

²⁰⁷ For Gärtner's business see NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, Magistrate Outjo to the Secretary, 18.8.1937. Bollig also refers to Gärtner and to a second Outjo based farmer/businessman, Borchers, see Bollig (1998b), p. 520ff.

²⁰⁸ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, Native Commissioner Owamboland, Hahn, to the Post Commander SWA Police Otjitundua, 21.6.1932. Interviewees in Sesfontein remembered Oldani and the business with him, interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe/Sesfontein, 27.12.2001.

²⁰⁹ NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, Paul Hoppe to Magistrate Outjo, 9.4.1938 & the Secretary for SWA to the Magistrate Outjo, Windhoek, 15.7.1938.

²¹⁰ NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, NC Owamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, 10.1.1938.

²¹¹ Bollig (1998b), p.521, where the author refers to a letter written to the colonial authorities by headman Thomas Mutate of Kaoko Otavi.

²¹² NAN NAO 019, reports 1933 & 1934, OC Native Affairs, Ondangwa, to the Secretary for SWA,

ably exceptionally privileged, as they enjoyed the advantages of long-standing relationships with businessmen in central Namibia. This situation was quite disturbing to the administration, although they were not in a position to interfere. When a certain Graf Hallwyl applied for permission to barter small stock from Tom's area, he had actually been asked to do so by Tom's sister, who had visited the man on his farm with this purpose in mind. The authorities gave permission for the transaction, yet resolutely warned Hallwyl that the prices charged for small stock in Kaoko were exorbitant and that he would probably not extract a fair profit.²¹³

Although the colonial government slightly eased the restrictions on trade in the mid-1930s, the barter in small stock never involved permission for farmers and traders from the Police Zone to enter Kaoko.²¹⁴ Animals had to be taken to Kamanjab and later Otjivazandu, where the police could keep an eye on transactions and make sure that trade partners followed the regulations. Besides the official argument that state control over the livestock trade was the only means to guarantee the prevention of animal diseases spreading into the Police Zone, unofficially the government's concern regarded the continuation of so called illicit activities, such as smuggling and, most of all, illegal hunting. Undoubtedly, hunting occurred and it continued to be a business where high revenues for both European and African hunter-traders could be expected.²¹⁵ Throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s the native commissioner insisted on the fact that poaching was a marginal, almost negligible, problem in Kaoko, partly because the headmen ensured that their subjects would stick to the laws.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, there were a few cases of Africans being prosecuted for illegal hunting, some of whom were imprisoned in Kamanjab²¹⁷ and rumours about colonial officials and police officers shooting game in the region were widely accepted.²¹⁸ Nevertheless, illegal hunting had become much more difficult by the mid-1930s, particularly in the southern parts of

annual report 1934, 4.1.1935.

²¹³ NAN NAO 029 24/1/3 – southern Kaokoveld affairs, 1926–34, OC Native Affairs, to the Secretary for SWA, 27.9.1934, concerning high prices charged by sellers in Kaoko; see also NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43 Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, Magistrate Outjo to the Secretary for SWA, 26.4.1938.

²¹⁴ NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43 Vol. 1, Removal of livestock to/from Kaokoveld 1935–1951, The Secretary for SWA to the Administrator, Windhoek, 31.10.1938.

²¹⁵ Interview with August Kasaona, Otjindagwe/Sesfontein, 20.12.2001.

²¹⁶ NAN NAO 018, monthly and annual reports, 1924–30, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Annual report 1929, 14.12.1929.

²¹⁷ NAN SWAA 941 A 82/47 – PP Kamanjab 1918–56, e.g. Enquiry held at Kamanjab re escapee Josef Tjomuono, 25.11.1935. Tjomunono had been imprisoned for hunting Royal Game. The biggest case around 'illegal' elephant hunting in Kaoko Otavi in the late 1920s will be discussed in Part IV.

²¹⁸ Bollig (1998b), pp. 525–526.

the region, where the administration successfully managed to prevent commercial hunters from entering Kaoko, and hence fulfilled one of the main aims of their border policy.²¹⁹

5.2.2. *Dependent work*

Compared to the developments in Owambo, dependent work in Kaoko, i.e. wage labour within the colonial economy, was a more fractured and incoherent process. Accordingly, while there is a long-standing historiography on the migrant or contract labour system in colonial Namibia,²²⁰ inquiry into its repercussions in the regions east and west of Owambo has remained marginal. The recruitment of workers in Kavango, which had been insignificant and unsystematic throughout the German colonial period,²²¹ steadily increased under South African rule. In contrast to Owambo, throughout the 1920s and 1930s, workers originating from the eastern region were mainly urged into dependent labour on farms all over the Police Zone.²²² Colonial policies in the north-west and the ways men and women experienced wage labour inside and beyond Kaoko took another form once again.

Although the presence of the colonial administration in Kaoko remained relatively weak, by the mid-1920s continuous police placement and the infrastructural requirements for control in the region created the need to involve the local communities in a variety of temporary and middle-term work and labour relations. Working in road construction, opening or improving water resources, building dams, or providing the colonial officers in the area with guides, carriers and translators, whenever there was the need, were all services expected from the local communities. Commissioner Hahn required the headmen to provide the authorities with workers without objecting.²²³ In his view, since people in Kaoko were not paying taxes, their services repaid the colonial government's granting of the right to reside in the reserves.²²⁴ Road construction for motor transport became increasingly important throughout the 1930s and it offered exceptional occasions and possibilities for young

²¹⁹ Miescher (2009), chapter 3, refers to the significance of the Police Zone boundary to prevent Europeans from entering the northern territories and engaging in all kind of activities held to be illegal.

²²⁰ Moorsom, R. (1989), *The Formation of the Contract Labour System in Namibia, 1900–1926*. In Zegeye, A. & Ishemo, S. (eds), *Forced Labour and Migration. Patterns of Movement within Africa*. London, Munich, New York, pp. 55–108; Cooper, A.D. (1999), *The Institutionalization of Contract Labour in Namibia*. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1: 121–38; Emmett (1999), pp. 181ff.

²²¹ Eckl (2004), pp. 321ff.

²²² Miescher (2009), pp. 247ff.

²²³ NAN NAO 019, reports 1933 & 1934, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Annual report 1934, 4.1.1935; NAN PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–31, Sgt. Hillebrand to OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, 1.6.1928.

²²⁴ NAN NAO 027 22/1, Tours to Ovamboland 1926–47, OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, to CNC Adams, 22.3.1928.

men in particular to be paid in cash, provided their headmen would eventually distribute the money they got from the administration to pay workers.²²⁵

Beyond erecting and maintaining infrastructure, the police posts became important centres for wage labour inside Kaoko. Characteristically, the colonial archives reflect the gendered bias in the accounts of work and labour relations in colonial Namibia, and the sources related to the various police posts exclusively mention African men who were employed as river guards, so called “native constables” or as guides and translators by the police.²²⁶ Oral information allows for a more nuanced understanding of work with the police forces. Once a man had been employed by the police, the job often initiated a continuation of police work over several generations within one family.²²⁷ Police posts were by no means places of gender homogeneity and attracted men and women alike, doing domestic work for the police officers or offering *ad hoc* services whenever the occasion arose. Police posts in Kaoko, i.e. Tshimhaka, Otjitundua and Kamanjab, had been strategically opened at residential places, at significant cattle posts or at nodal points of migration, thus facilitating the formation of working relationships.²²⁸

In line with its general policy of labour recruitment, the main interest of the authorities in Windhoek remained the integration of Kaoko into the contract labour system. The north-western region did, however, turn out to be a constant source of frustration to the colonial government and, in 1932, the secretary for the protectorate aired his deep irritation, noting that “the natives of Kaoko contribute nothing whatsoever to the labour supply of the territory”.²²⁹ Indeed, as we saw earlier, the annual reports the secretary had received by the native commissioner had given reason for concern, as they could never provide any information on successful recruitment of workers in Kaoko. The archival sources available

²²⁵ Vita Tom recruited road gangs in 1926 and Muhona Katiti did so in 19333; both headmen received money to pay their workers. Yet only in 1949 Hahn did decide to declare payment for road construction workers to be compulsory. See Bollig (1998b), p. 525.

²²⁶ NAN NAO 019, reports 1933 & 1934, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Annual report 1934, 4.1.1935. Up to the mid 1930s Tshimhaka had three European and three ‘native’ constables, which was the average strength of police at the various police posts; NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld general Vol. 2, Sgt. Cogill, Police Tshimhaka to OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, 30.10.1933, re ‘native’ constables at Otjitundua. The numbers of police in Kaoko would significantly rise in the late 1930s, as we shall see in Part V.

²²⁷ Interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002 and with Ngakurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 8.5.2002. Both men worked as policemen and river guards on the Kunene, as did their fathers and grandfathers.

²²⁸ Interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002. See also Miescher (2009), chapter 6, describing similar conditions for the police post at Namutoni on the southern margin of the Etosha pan.

²²⁹ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld general, Vol. 2, the Secretary for the Protectorate, Windhoek, to the OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, 19.11.1932.

mention but a few cases in which men were recruited e.g. in 1930, when five men were contracted in Kaoko Otavi²³⁰ and again in October 1933, when a few men had been sent to the Outjo district for farm work, but were said to have left their workplaces soon after because the wages were ridiculous.²³¹ In any case, figures for the formal, state-organized recruitment of labour remained very low throughout the 1930s, especially when compared to the reserves in central Namibia. As Werner has shown, by 1930 the Herero reserves had experienced considerable economic decline as a result of drought and depression and African stockowners had become increasingly dependent on the purchase of food from outside the reserves as well as on wage labour.²³² Faced with taxes to be paid to the administration, a large number of men engaged in wage labour aiming, as Werner argues, at maintaining the size of herds and eventually hoping to enlarge them.²³³ Based on statistical data relating to the various Herero reserves in central Namibia, an estimated average of 30% of the male population was out at work at any one time between 1929 and 1934.²³⁴ No doubt the recruitment of labourers in Kaoko never reached these figures in the late 1920s and early 1930s. While the archives suggest an almost non-existent involvement of Kaoko's inhabitants as workers in the colonial economy, oral information casts doubt on this conclusion and, in contrast to the colonial narrative which portrays contract and migrant labour exclusively within the male domain,²³⁵ the question of gender is far more nuanced.

Neither archival nor oral information on Kaoko allow for a quantitative assessment of contract labour in the north-western region in the 1930s, but some parameters and specificities of wage labour can nevertheless be outlined. First, as long as colonial and, in particular, police presence in the region remained low and the ecological and economic crisis of the early 1930s forced people to engage with various strategies in order to recover, leaving the region and taking up employment elsewhere remained an option. Geographical location was a variable. While men and women from the communities in southern Kaoko usually opted for temporary employment on farms in the Kamanjab and Outjo area, people in the central and northern areas apparently were less inclined to do so.²³⁶ To accept farm work

²³⁰ NAN NAO 029 24/1/3 – southern Kaokoveld affairs, 1926–34, OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, to the Secretary for the Protectorate, 29.10.1930, stating that headman Thomas Mutate helped with recruiting the men.

²³¹ NAN NAO 019, reports 1933 & 1934, OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, to the Secretary for the Protectorate, monthly report October 1933, 3.11.1933.

²³² Werner (1998), p. 158.

²³³ Werner (1998), p. 159.

²³⁴ Werner (1998), p. 160.

²³⁵ Bollig (1998b), p. 510.

²³⁶ Contract labour in the 1930s is not an issue in the oral accounts from northern Kaoko edited by Michael Bollig. See Bollig (1997).

through a formal contract issued by the colonial authorities was one, though according to oral information, not the characteristic procedure chosen by the region's migrants. While Hahn's grants of permits and passes were more than modest, the local appropriation of the permit system proved rather successful. Accordingly, if a man, woman or often a couple²³⁷ decided to leave Kaoko in order to take up work on a farm, various local authorities could provide them with a permit or pass, be it the "native" constable stationed in the area,²³⁸ local church elders,²³⁹ or the respective headman.²⁴⁰ Indeed, the control of people's mobility beyond the region remained a contested sphere, and both colonial officers as well as members of the local elite struggled to have their say in it. It was precisely the ambivalence and clash of interests surrounding the jurisdiction within the permit system, which allowed men and women willing to leave the region as migrant workers, to negotiate the terms and parameters of their mobility.²⁴¹

5.2.3. *Informal mobility*

As mentioned above, official labour migration was restricted in terms of gender, i.e. it was mainly men, ideally young men, who were supposed to leave the northern territories in order to work on farms or mines in central and southern Namibia and, at times, as far as South Africa. The colonial narrative on migrant workers expressed itself in a general ban on female mobility and, by the late 1930s, on the enforcement of passes for male migrants.²⁴² Meredith McKittrick has referred to the ways in which African migration undermined the ideal colonial vision of a transient male labour force, destined to spend a limited period of time on a mine, farm or railway construction site, and eventually return back to his reserve of origin.²⁴³ Indeed, male and female continue to be complex categories in the context of

²³⁷ Interview with Abraham /Awa-Eiseb, Sesfontein, 19.12.2001.

²³⁸ Interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002, stating that his father and grandfather used to give out permits in southern and central Kaoko.

²³⁹ Interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 25.9.2001, referring to Nikodemus Kido, and later, his son Benjamin Kido.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Otjindagwe/Sesfontein, 27.12.2001. According to the interviewee contract labour had begun under Levi Uixamab, i.e. in the early 1920s, but increased significantly under his son, Nathanael Uixamab. Muhona Katiti was also suspected by the colonial authorities of misusing police competence in this regard, see NAN PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–31, Sgt. Cogill, Tshimhaka police, to OC Native Affairs Ondangua, Hahn, 30.10.1929.

²⁴¹ According to oral information the relative liberty within the permit system stopped in the late 1930s and early 1940s, when official pass laws were imposed in the region. Interview with Abraham /Awa-Eiseb, Sesfontein, 19.12.2001.

²⁴² McKittrick (2002), p. 171. For a similar discussion on gendered patterns of migration, particularly migrant work, see Simelane, H. S. (2004), *The State, Chiefs and the Control of Female Migration in Colonial Swaziland ca. 1930s to 1950s. Journal of African History*, 45: 103–24.

²⁴³ McKittrick (2002), p. 173.

mobility as much as in any other.²⁴⁴ Various factors influenced an individual's decision to leave his or her home and to migrate from the north southwards; these motivating factors included seasonal fluctuations, the requirements of crop cultivation or stock rearing, association with missions or negotiations within families and households, age, gender and social status.²⁴⁵

The accounts of the colonial archives tend to lend a simplistic understanding of mobility in Kaoko, merely differentiating between legal forms, usually the one by male workers, and the sedentariness of the remaining population, deeply anchored in a domestic and agricultural space confined to the borders of the reserves. Nevertheless, archival sources do occasionally refer to alternative, more informal forms of mobility, and not by coincidence they involve women. In the 1930s, a few cases were recorded in which women applied to the colonial authorities for permission to change residence and leave Kaoko for another reserve of their choice. The applications were generally motivated by a need to counter pressures and to resolve conflicts within families and, at times, between spouses, or simply to secure economic wellbeing. In the aftermath of the famine of 1931, widows, for example, had become particularly vulnerable²⁴⁶ and the application by Katharina Hartley was a case in point. Her husband, George Hartley, had died years earlier and her children lived scattered throughout the areas around Tsumeb and Grootfontein. Lacking the means and social networks in Kaoko to sustain her, she asked commissioner Hahn first to trace her family who were meant to provide her with food and clothing and then to contact her son to come and fetch her.²⁴⁷ In another instance, the superintendent of the Epukiro reserve informed Hahn that a woman named Theresa had applied for permission to move with her child to the reserve in central Namibia.²⁴⁸ The woman had been deserted by her husband and she intended to move to Epukiro and stay with her brother, who had agreed to accommodate her. Social networks, be it the nuclear or extended family or friends, played an important role for the conditions and trajectories of informal mobility, particularly for women who ran the risk of being marginalized within their communities. But beyond offering refuge and support in a situation of conflict or crisis, kin and social life continuously presented incen-

²⁴⁴ Hayes (1992), p. 338.

²⁴⁵ McKittrick (2002), p. 173.

²⁴⁶ Interview with Kuairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002, interview with Maririro Koviti Tjihurura, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002.

²⁴⁷ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld general, Vol. 2, Sgt. Cogill to the Native Commissioner Ondonga, Otjitundua, 6.6.1933, Native Commissioner Owamboland, Hahn, to Post Commander South West Africa Police Otjitundua, Ondangua, 19.9.1933, and Sgt. Fuller, Post Commander S.W.A. Police Tsumeb to the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Tsumeb, 28.8.1933.

²⁴⁸ NAN NAO 028, Kaokoveld general, Vol. 2, Superintendent Epukiro reserve to the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, 15.4.1935.

tives to leave Kaoko, whether in order to attend funerals and weddings, or simply to visit relatives residing somewhere else.²⁴⁹ These temporary migrations due to family obligations could mutate into other forms of mobility and eventually lead to employment or permanent residence, if an occasion or need cropped up.²⁵⁰ These forms of female mobility, which transcended the logic of colonial territories, usually remained beyond colonial control and prompted migration-induced anxieties among the administration's officials.²⁵¹

In the realm of social spaces and networks of mobility within and beyond Kaoko, Christian communities played an important role in the late 1920s and 1930. The post-famine period brought their significance increasingly to the fore. As we saw, the Rhenish Mission Society had established a church and school in Sesfontein in southern Kaoko in the late 19th century. Since its founding, the missionary outpost had existed to a large extent independently of the European missionary stationed in Outjo, and contacts had remained marginal. This was increasingly so after the shift in colonial power and the gradual divestment of Kaoko from the Outjo district throughout the 1920s. Missionary Neumeister, who had taken over responsibilities in 1928, only managed to visit Sesfontein a few times throughout the 1930s and when the local evangelist Nikodemus Kido died in 1936, the mission struggled to maintain its influence on the local congregation.²⁵² Furthermore, the Rhenish Mission was by far the sole Christian presence in the region, not least owing to the important population shifts in the north-west, including shifts in the aftermath of the colonial war between 1904 and 1907, and immigration from Angola throughout the late 1910s. The mobile communities had favoured the spread of various mission and independent church influences, and we have already referred to the role played by African evangelists in Kaoko's residential centres, such as Otjijandjasemo in northern Kaoko. By the early 1930s, the various Christian activities had come to the attention of Hahn, who had by then distinguished himself as an advocate of the maintenance of undisturbed African tribal life and had increasingly expressed distrust towards the impact of the Finnish Mission Society in Owambo.²⁵³ In 1932, evangelists regularly travelled between Ondangwa and various other sites in central and northern Kaoko, including Okorosave, where the Christian community had reached relative institutional stability.²⁵⁴ This was the only congregation in Kaoko that could pro-

²⁴⁹ Interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001, interview with Kainaa Menjengua Tjihero, Kaoko Otavi, 8.1.2002..

²⁵⁰ Interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001.

²⁵¹ Hayes (1998a), pp. 142–143.

²⁵² ELCRN V 27, Gemeinde-Chronik der Missionsstation Outjo, D.S.W. Afrika, 1904–67, information for the period between 1928 and 1937.

²⁵³ McKittrick (2002), pp. 184ff.

²⁵⁴ NAN NAO 018, monthly and annual reports, 1924–30, OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Annual report 1928, Ondangwa, 12.12.1928 and OC Native Affairs, Hahn, to the Secre-

vide the mission in Owambo and colonial authorities with statistical data, assessing that in 1934, 79 men and 92 women were registered members of the Finnish Mission Society in the north-west.²⁵⁵

Meredith McKittrick has considered Christianity's impact on the mobility of men and women in Owambo in the early 20th century, showing how religion and migrant labour grew together. Both institutions shared common elements, such as the centrality of European goods or the importance of generational networks, and they both provided an alternative basis for community in a situation of change and uncertainty.²⁵⁶ In Kaoko the link between Christianity and mobility was more fractured and emerged from the potential offered by religious institutions to transcend borders, both within African societies or those imposed by the colonial state. Throughout the 1930s, when the colonial authorities notoriously tried to hamper people's mobility and to force them into contingent tribal territories under increasingly rigid political tutelage, the independent Christian congregations in Sesfontein, Okorosave and Otjijandjasemo became alternative spaces, which not only offered access to specific goods and services, but also opened up a dynamic field of geographical and social mobility. As we saw, it was precisely the historical dissociation and remoteness, which had determined mission work in Kaoko since its very beginnings, in that it allowed for local negotiations and appropriations less prone to moralist intervention by missionaries.²⁵⁷ Oral information stresses the significance of education and literacy and the opportunities these offered to transcend the limits put on life in the reserves.²⁵⁸ School education, books and paper, clothing and other products associated with Christianity became the material assets of a shared sense of values held in common and of belonging to a community blurring the constriction of colonial and traditional definitions, in particular for young people and for women of lower socio-economic status.²⁵⁹ Indeed, being literate served men and women in their attempts to find ways of leaving and to move beyond the reserve borders. For some privileged people, such as members of the headmen's entourage or the children of local

tary for SWA, monthly report December 1932, n.d.

²⁵⁵ NAN NAO 019, reports 1933 and 1934, Rev. Alho to the NC Ovamboland, 3.11.1933.

²⁵⁶ McKittrick (2002), p. 175.

²⁵⁷ ee Part I chapter 4.2.2.

²⁵⁸ Interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 14.9.2001, Interview with Christina Awos, Sesfontein, 17.9.2001, Interview with Mariri Koviti Tjihurura, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002. On literacy and its socio-political implications in colonial Africa see Guy, J. (1994); Krüger, G. (2009), *Schrift-Macht-Alltag. Lesen und Schreiben im Kolonialen Südafrika*. Köln, Weimar, Wien; Harries, P. (2001), *Missionaries, Marxists and Magic: Power and the Politics of Literacy in South-East Africa*. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3: 406–472.

²⁵⁹ McKittrick (2002), p. 190. Interview with Louda Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 14.9.2001, Interview with Christina Awos, Sesfontein, 17.9.2001, Interview with Mariri Koviti Tjihurura, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002.

evangelists, the mission provided educational sojourns in central Namibia.²⁶⁰ We have mentioned local appropriations of bureaucratic procedures and the ability to read and write permits had become a form of social capital in the 1920s and 1930s. Men such as Vita Tom and Langman Tjahura had used their literacy to improve their position and status within the emerging colonial society. The archives give evidence of their continuous petitioning of the police, the magistrate and the commissioner in Ondangwa on behalf of their subjects.²⁶¹ In addition, letters and regular correspondence linked families, interest groups and eventually political movements throughout colonial Namibia and enabled people to maintain contacts and increase mobility against all likelihood.²⁶²

5.3. Gender and the enforcement of reserves

Reconstructing the South African border and reserves policy in the late 1920s and early 1930s presupposes a specific perspective on exploring how these policies determined gender and the experiences of men and women residing in Kaoko in the period under consideration. The colonial narrative on borders predominantly focused on constituting Kaoko as a contingent space and only selectively considered the implications the reserves would have for the region's inhabitants. This was the case because the South African authorities had to address issues of mobility and measures of containment forcing them to formulate and apply corresponding policies on the ground.

The visibility of individual women and men, as well as the analysis of gender and gender relations based on the archival sources relating to the politics of colonial borders and territorialities, remains fractured and often marginal. Most obviously, the creation of reserves inside Kaoko had its impact within the political domain and we have shown the significance that stable territories and confined mobility had within the reconfiguration of male political leadership under colonialism. Still, supervising mobility of men and women inside and beyond Kaoko remained a continuous concern and a logistical problem for both the colonial authorities and the local headmen. The vagueness and incompleteness of information and expertise on mobile households and on mobile herds in the colonial archives reflect the

²⁶⁰ E.g. Benjamin Kido, Nikodemus Kido's son, or Levi Uixamab, see Schneider (2001), pp. 67 & 69, or several members of the Hartley family, interview with Solomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002.

²⁶¹ Particularly the Files of the Police Post Tshimhaka contain numerous examples of letters written by the men mentioned. See NAN PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–31 and NAN PTJ 1 7/F, Famine 1931.

²⁶² Bollig (1998b), p. 510, concerning contacts to mainstream political movements in central Namibia in the 1920. Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 7.5.2002, interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002.

limits and shortcomings of colonial power in the early 1930s. Indeed, the formal evidence of controlled mobility, the pass laws and their implementation, is almost nil.

Nevertheless, the border and reserves policies and their simultaneous occurrence with a period of drought and famine left its imprint on Kaoko's socio-economic landscape. The increased pressure on social, economic and physical wellbeing was particularly felt by those members of the local society who would become marginalized due to age, gender or economic status – ordinary male and female pastoralists, young people, and widows. Various strategies helped alleviate the deterioration of people's livelihoods, and it has been argued that entering the colonial economy, although under specific conditions which had to be negotiated, was one option within an increasingly limited spectrum of agency. Trade, road construction and, most of all, contract work became sites of gender contestation; the colonial narrative notoriously relegated dependent work and migrant labour to the exclusively male domain. The archives do allow us to draw some examples of women who countered the gendered norm, including young women willing to leave the reserve, elite women maintaining trade networks with commercial farmers in the Outjo district, and widows working with the colonial system to claim family obligations from relatives. Yet oral information in particular suggests more complex forms of both social and geographical mobility framed by colonialism in the 1920s and 1930s. Christianity and the material goods, as well as the social capital linked to it, sustained the emergence and constitution of communities based on a sense of alternative communality. Literacy and communication through letters, notes and petitions linked men and women in Kaoko to networks based on kin, on social exchange and on political affiliation, all of which transcended the limitations of life in the reserves.

Part IV

Gender & Colonial Law

1. Introduction

As we have seen, South African presence and intervention in north-western Namibia grew by the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s. The border and reserves policy proved to be a domain in which the colonial state faced serious problems and was only partially able to impose its plans. The border policy was quite successful in terms of dividing the African population from the settler society in the Outjo district and laid the ground for a territorial division, which would influence the geographical and socio-economic parameters of life inside the reserves. The political landscape was increasingly attuned to the policy of containment, and the constitution of male political leadership became more and more dependent on stable territories with stable populations. But the grand plan of the four internal reserves surrounded by buffers and neutral zones marking the limits of Kaoko as a contingent area did not remain uncontested. Mobility of people and of animals continued, particularly as the policing and control of both internal and external borders remained arbitrary and ineffective. The fractured character of colonial rule in Kaoko was reflected in the barrenness of the implementation of a whole set of legislation such as the pass laws, aimed at controlling mobile populations in the colony. Against all odds, the inhabitants of Kaoko continued to define their mobility in terms of the requirements of the pastoral economy, increasingly so, when drought and famine forced them to extend the radius of their migrations in order to secure the survival of people and herds.

Our concern with what follows remains with the late 1920s and early 1930s, but we will change the focus and move into a domain in which negotiations between the colonial administration and local representatives and leaders of the African communities proved as much contested as they were in the realm of mobility and containment. As elsewhere in the territory, the question of law and order and jurisdiction was central to the successful implementation of colonial rule. Because the South African system based its administration in the northern territories on a model of indirect rule, the authorities had to sort out how to classify offenders and offences, and most of all to decide under which jurisdiction law cases would eventually fall. As we shall see, the different domains and competencies, i.e. the jurisdiction of so-called traditional or customary courts and those claimed by the colonial state, were drawn up rather quickly, at least in theory. But the practices in the region were much more complex and contradictory, and depended on factors and considerations lying beyond the realm of the law. The entanglement of various judicial systems and the biased character of their application in the north-western region in the late 1920s and early 1930s are exemplified in the realm of so-called illegal hunting and poaching. As we shall see, the control of game, its management and use and, not least, its commercial exploitation, gradually grew

into an arena of contestation and into an idiom of gender negotiations, particularly, but by far exclusively, among men.

In the late 1920s an important criminal case around poaching emerged in Kaoko. This led to a cumbersome investigation of events entailing the production of ample information on people, acts and offences by the colonial authorities. The documentary and investigative vigour resulted in bureaucratic filings and eventually in numerous archival sources. The more dense and coherent such a body of archival documents becomes, the more we face processes of fabricating and shaping information; these sources become strategic representations of a colonial narrative bound to specific aims and interests. Reconstructing historical events and contexts based on criminal court records, and associated documents, becomes highly ambivalent and problematic and methodological problems resulting from the limitations of such sources will be of central interest in what follows. Some of the shortcomings of the archival materials can be augmented by oral information. The criminal case alluded to enter the realm of oral traditions quite prominently. As we shall see, the weighing up of various narratives around the case will allow for a critical evaluation of events and the ways they were formulated in terms of the legal prosecution, as well as their implications for the affected communities.

2. The elephant shooting case

In December 1934 native commissioner Hahn informed the secretary for the protectorate about the investigation of an elephant shooting in late 1929 and the disappearance and killing of a witness in 1930 at Kaoko Otavi in the central part of the region.¹ In his report, the commissioner announced what he thought of as “one of the biggest murder trials ever held under our administration”.² Just a few weeks before, the two main accused in the trial, Thomas Mutate³, one of the headmen in the region, and Thomas Aishama had been arrested and brought to the nearest magistrate’s court in Outjo for a preliminary examination.⁴ At first the elephant shooting had been settled; Thomas Mutate, as the local headman being held responsible for the transgression, had been fined 35 head of cattle to be paid to the

¹ Parts of this chapter have been published as Rizzo, L. (2007), The Elephant Shooting – Inconsistencies of Colonial Law and Indirect Rule in Kaoko (north-western Namibia) in the 1920s and 1930s. *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 48, No. 2: 245–266.

² NAN SWAA 2069 – A/454/171, 14.12.1934.

³ Thomas Mutate is the name used by the South African administration. In the region Thomas Mutate was known as Katjitoha Thomas Humu. Humu is the surname used in north-western Namibia, while Mutate is the corresponding surname in central Namibia.

⁴ NAN LOU 1/2/2 – Nr. 24, Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), No. 23 and No. 24.

administration.⁵ Yet, in view of the disappearance of Petrus Kakuyu, one of the numerous witnesses in the shooting case, and due to rumours of further illegal elephant hunting in and around Kaoko Otavi, Hahn re-opened investigations shortly afterwards. Eventually, Thomas Mutate was sentenced to forced labour and imprisonment. Aishama too was sent to prison yet for a much shorter period. There was, however, a third convict, who had been gradually drawn into the case and was sentenced to several years of imprisonment, namely Vita Tom.⁶

This chapter is concerned with the emergence and making of a criminal case in Kaoko between 1929 and 1935⁷ and its bearing on the development of colonial native administration in the territory. In short, the late 1920s and early 1930s saw the replacement of a few powerful political leaders, among them Vita Tom, by a headmen council operating as the new partner of the South African colonial officers in the north-west. This significant administrative shift has loosely been referred to in the literature available on Kaoko's past. The prevalent interpretation has explained the introduction of the headmen council as the inevitable consequence of the successful prosecution of criminal acts and individuals and the political vacuum caused by Tom's affliction and eventual death in 1937. In contrast, the analysis of the case and the narrative rules it obeyed will show that colonial law didn't aim at the implementation of justice and that the reframing of the region's political landscape was meticulously orchestrated by various agents involved, most notably the native commissioner Hahn.⁸

As said before, the "elephant case" figures quite prominently in oral traditions from central Kaoko. The elephant shooting and the alleged murder of Petrus Kakuyu had been actively raised by some of the men I interviewed as an instance of significant political conflict.⁹ What was particular, both with contemporary oral information and with the extensive

⁵ NAN LOU 1/2/2 – Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), No. 23, statement given by C.H.L. Hahn, magistrate Outjo, 1.2.1935.

⁶ All men were eventually sentenced by the Circuit Court for the northern Districts, held at Otjiwarongo, in 1935. See NAN SCW 1/1/78, 23/1935 and 24/1935.

⁷ I am not reconstructing events in order to answer the question of what happened in terms of a criminal investigation, i.e. if there was a murder and who had been the culprit. I agree with Richard Rathbone's scepticism about the historian's competence to make *post hoc* judgements on guilt and innocence. See Rathbone, R. (1989), A murder in the colonial Gold Coast: law and politics in the 1940s. *Journal of African History*, 30: 445–461.

⁸ My argument significantly dissents with the interpretation in van Warmelo (1951) and in Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999). A point similar to my argument is made by Friedman (2005), 28. For a more general discussion of legal processes as elements of colonial state formation see Manicom, L. (1992), Ruling relations: rethinking state and gender in South African history. *Journal of African History*, 33: 441–465, here p. 460.

⁹ Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, 10.1.2002, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, 9.1.2002, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi.

archival sources¹⁰ was the strong ambivalence about what had happened and who had been involved in the case. In fact, the administration's search for evidence remained unsuccessful – neither were the remains of the elephant nor Petrus Kakuyu ever found.¹¹ In what follows, I will concentrate firstly, on the archival sources and the patterns, which determined their production. What kind of representations are the records and reports produced in the cases? What kind of narratives do they constitute? By which processes were some stories questioned or discredited, while others were inscribed as evidence and truth?¹² Indeed, one of the main challenges lies in reflecting on how the information emerged as evidence in the investigation and, eventually, was constituted as historical evidence in the archive.¹³ The second aspect dealt with in this context is the question of the contents and contexts we can establish with regard to fractured and controversial stories about an event.¹⁴ Why did this case come to the attention of the administration (while others did less so or not at all),¹⁵ what were the disputes involved, were they “solved” and, if so, how? But let me begin with the story about the elephant and the killing of a witness.

2.1. Reconstructing the case

From its very beginning, the reconstruction of the events proved to be problematic. Rumours about the shooting of an elephant first reached the administration in mid-1929 when

¹⁰ The growth in documentation mirrored an increased administrative activity and state consolidation in the northern areas from the late 1920s onwards. See Silvester et al (1998), pp. 22ff.; Emmett (1999), pp. 95ff.

¹¹ NAN LOU 1/2/1 – Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), No. 23, statement by police officer G.A. Schoombee.

¹² Stoler, A. L. (1992), In cold blood: hierarchies of credibility and the politics of colonial narratives. *Representations* 37. *Special issue on 'Imperial Fantasies and Postcolonial Histories'*: 151–189.

¹³ See the discussion in Lalu, P. (2000), The grammar of domination and the subjection of agency: colonial texts and modes of evidence. *History & Theory*, 39/4, *Theme Issue 39: 'Not Telling: Secrecy, Lies, and History'*: 45–68, here p. 52. There are various debates on the modes of knowledge production of colonial archives, among them most prominently the discussions inspired by the Subaltern Studies. See e.g. Prakash (1994). Hamilton et al (2002) draws from these debates, too. I owe special thanks to my colleagues at the history department of the University of the Western Cape, particularly to Premesh Lalu, Ciraj Rassool and Leslie Witz, who have been raising these issues on many occasions.

¹⁴ The various and sometimes contradicting versions of what happened are not to be seen in terms of true and false, but rather as mirroring the context in which they emerged. For a broader discussion of this argument see the introduction to White, L. (2000a), *Speaking with Vampires. Rumour and History in Colonial Africa*. Berkeley.

¹⁵ Generally, the administration's consideration of violence in the reserves was very biased and depended among other things on whether it was seen to be a threat to the colonial state or not. For a general discussion see Killingray, D. (1985), The maintenance of law and order in British colonial Africa. *African Affairs*, 85: 411–437. I will come back to this point later on.

Upuni Hiamauva¹⁶ reported the case to the police stationed at Tshimhaka on the northern Kunene River border.¹⁷ Investigations began. Colonial officers recorded statements by witnesses saying that an elephant was said to have approached the spring at Kaoko Otavi.¹⁸ It was the dry season and residents had seen the animal roaming around the place. As they noticed a wound in the elephant's foreleg, the community gathered in the vicinity of the spring.¹⁹ Apparently, the local headman, Thomas Mutate, advised some of the men, among them Upuni, to get rid of the animal by chasing it into the bush.²⁰ At this stage, accounts of what happened diverged. While Upuni and those men involved in the chase claimed to have left the animal, still alive, somewhere in the bush, and that it had later been shot by the headman himself or at least on his orders,²¹ Thomas Mutate and others accused Upuni of having killed it.²² Things got more complicated with the involvement of Vita Tom²³ supporting Mutate and Aishama. As if to increase the confusion, at a certain stage of the investigation several pairs of elephant tusks were produced, but, which pair of tusks belonged to the animal shot and who was responsible for its demise? What seemed obvious by then was that shooting big game was far from exceptional, yet usually occurred beyond the administration's knowledge. For whatever reason in this particular case, local residents had deliberately involved the colonial state's representatives. To prevent further complications, Hahn initially decided to settle things and levy a fine on Thomas Mutate.²⁴ But the case took a new direction when Petrus Kakuyu disappeared.

¹⁶ Upuni (Oupani) Hiamauva is the name used in the written archival documents. Interviewees too used this name, while sometimes calling him Tjitjapia (e.g. Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette, 10.1.2002). Upuni was an important character in local politics and would make his political career within colonial administration in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

¹⁷ NAN NAO 028 24/1/1, Recorded statement of Upuni, interrogated by Hahn, Kaoko Otavi, 3.9.1930,

¹⁸ See NAN NAO 028 24/1/1, e.g. recorded statement of Jakob Kakwatauhora, taken by Sgt. du Buisson, Kaoko Otavi, 22.5.1930, recorded statement of Lumingo Kamahoto, taken by Hahn, Kaoko Otavi, 3.9.1930.

¹⁹ NAN NAO 028 24/1/1, recorded statement of Lumingo Kamahoto, taken by Hahn, Kaoko Otavi, 3.9.1930, recorded statement of Upuni, taken by Hahn, Kaoko Otavi, 3.9.1930.

²⁰ NAN NAO 028 24/1/1, recorded statement of Lumingo Kamahoto, taken by Hahn, Kaoko Otavi, 3.9.1930, recorded statement of Upuni, taken by Hahn, Kaoko Otavi, 3.9.1930.

²¹ NAN NAO 028 24/1/1, recorded statement of Upuni, taken by Hahn, Kaoko Otavi, 3.9.1930.

²² NAN NAO 028 24/1/1, recorded statement of Tshinjinda, taken by Hahn, Kaoko Otavi, 3.9.1930 and NAN NAO 20 24/1/4, recorded statement of Thomas Mutate, taken by Hahn (probably at Ondangua), n.d., NAN NAO 28 – 24/1/4 – statement of Karukururume, taken by Hahn, 3.9.1930.

²³ Vita Tom is locally referred to as Harunga or his Afrikaans name Oorlog.

²⁴ NAN NAO 028 24/1/1, Hahn to the Secretary for SWA, 23.11.1935.

2.2. The murder case

Apparently, the disappearance of Kakuyu had been intentional.²⁵ Some of the witnesses accused headman Thomas Mutate, stating that he had at least ordered the killing²⁶ as he faced difficulties in controlling information and in enforcing a coherent handling of the case by his subjects.²⁷ Seemingly, Kakuyu had questioned the headman's authority and threatened to provide Hahn with information on who had indeed shot the elephant.²⁸ In view of his being challenged, Mutate had involved Vita Tom and other political dignitaries.²⁹ They were said to have removed Kakuyu from Kaoko Otavi for the period of Hahn's investigation. Eventually, when Mutate and some of his subjects, among them Aishama, led Kakuyu into the bush, things deteriorated and the headman was said to have stabbed the victim.³⁰ Hence, the motive for the murder was rooted in the victim's refusal to be loyal and to accept the way the headman intended to solve the elephant problem.

Yet others accused the police officers in charge. Some of the witnesses, among them the victim's wife thought sergeant du Buisson, who had been entrusted with the preliminary investigation of the elephant case, to be responsible for Kakuyu's fate.³¹ Apparently the policeman had continuously harassed inhabitants of Kaoko Otavi, threatening them with prosecution in cases where they refused to cooperate and applying drastic measures to reach his goals.³² When rumours of misbehaviour by his officers cropped up, Hahn chose to move temporarily to the place and to do the questioning of witnesses himself.³³

²⁵ NAN NAO 28 – 24/1/1, Hahn to police station Tshimhaka, 7.11.1934.

²⁶ E.g. NAN NAO 28 – 24/1/1, statement of Upani, given to Sgt. Cogill, translated by Willem Hartley, (November 1934), and statement of Hiakatondo Kututa, translated by Willem Hartley, recorded by Sgt. Cogill, (November 1934).

²⁷ NAN NAO 28 – 24/1/1, statement of Willem Hartley, recorded by Sgt. Cogill, Ondangwa, 21st (November, 1934).

²⁸ NAN LOU 1/2/2 – Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), No. 23 – statement of Ventuura Nejanena, n.d. and statement of Japapo Jacob, n.d.

²⁹ NAN LOU 1/2/2 – Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), No. 23, statement of Willem Hartley, n.d.

³⁰ This version dominates in oral accounts on the disappearance of Petrus Kakuyu.

³¹ NAN NAO 28 – 24/1/1, statement of Josephine, recorded by Hahn at Kaoko Otavi, 3. 9.1930. Later, in front of the magistrate, Josephine Mavere would revise her statement and accuse Thomas Mutate. She would then be supported by a number of other women. Ironically du Buisson himself confirmed that he had at least menaced Kakuyu, see NAN LOU 1/2/2/ – Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), No. 23, statement of P.G. du Buisson.

³² NAN NAO 28 24/1/1, translation of a letter by Oorlog to Hahn, 14.6.1930; recorded statement of Thomas Mutate, recorded by Hahn, n.d.; Policemen and the native commissioner using violence during the investigation has been confirmed in interviews (Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette, 7.5.2002 and with David Humu, Kaoko Otavi, 12.1.2002).

³³ While the chronologies of the documents suggest Hahn's temporary movement to Kaoko Otavi, there is no particular document in the archive that dates his decision precisely. Interviewees liked

The outcome of the investigation could not have been more contradictory and neither the native commissioner, nor the witnesses accusing the headman, managed to find Kakuyu's remains. The victim's body was said to have been burnt, and ghoulish accounts of the killing emerged.³⁴ But, regardless of a total lack of evidence and some rather dubious modes of investigation, Thomas Mutate and Thomas Aishama were found guilty and sentenced to prison.³⁵ Vita Tom, who in the end was held responsible by the administration for all the trouble, could not be connected directly to the murder, yet was found guilty of hindering the investigation, forcing witnesses to make false statements and was likewise sent to prison.³⁶

3. A place in-between – colonial ambivalence and African friction in Kaoko Otavi

3.1. Kaoko Otavi at the beginning of the 20th century

Kaoko Otavi is one of the most important springs and hence places of residence in central Kaoko. The exceptionally favourable ecological conditions and the location of the spring along one of the main migration routes through the region have sustained the continuity of human settlement since at least the early 19th century. Within colonial narratives Kaoko Otavi has been a nodal point, linked to the history of early European expansion into the north-west and, by the early 20th century, to the claim of colonial control in the region. As we saw earlier on, commercial trade in Kaoko since the late 1870s was particularly driven by the amplitude of game found in the region, and the promise of high revenues had attracted many players on the ground.³⁷ Travellers' and missionaries' accounts of the late 19th century often mentioned Kaoko Otavi, the place having grown into a centre of Boer hunting activities and cattle trading. Indeed, the Trek Boers, who had left the Transvaal in the mid-1870s and eventually found their way to Angola in the early 1880s, managed to infiltrate trade between Africans and Europeans as intermediaries all over Namibia, a role they man-

to make jokes about Hahn building a temporary hut in a tree, where the native commissioner used to spend the night (Interview with David Humu, Kaoko Otavi, 12.1.2002).

³⁴ The archival documents are rather short with regard to the alleged burning of the human remains (NAN LOU 1/2/1, Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), M. van Niekerk, district surgeon, in front of the magistrate Outjo, no date). In contrast, some interviewees extensively told bloody stories about it (Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette, 7.5.2002 and with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette, 7.5.2002).

³⁵ NAN LOU 1/2/2 – Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), No. 23, preparatory examination Thomas Mutate and Thomas Aishama (case against), 13.3.1935.

³⁶ NAN LOU 1/2/2 – Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), No. 24, preparatory examination on Chief Oorlog (case against), 15.5.1935.

³⁷ See part I above.

aged to play skilfully in Kaoko too.³⁸ The hunter-trader Axel Eriksson noted in 1879 that the settlement of a few scattered Boer families in Kaoko Otavi had reanimated and led to a perceptible ease of commercial hunting activities throughout the north-western and the Etosha region.³⁹

The suitability of the springs and the advantages for European endeavours resulting from Kaoko Otavi's position in the middle of the region continued to attract colonial attention, particularly in the early 1910s, when the scattered German police forces in Kaoko began to look for alternative locations for their post in Sesfontein.⁴⁰

African presence in Kaoko Otavi only entered the narrative field of colonial reports when missionaries Heinrich Vedder and Bernhard Trey visited the area in 1914. Vedder's sojourn and involvement with the local community found its way into local oral accounts thus reflecting the contradictory dynamics of Kaoko Otavi's exposure to and involvement with the colonial realm in the mid-1910s. In his report, Vedder recognized the importance of the strong orientation towards western Owambo, and the economic diversification that sustained Kaoko Otavi's recovery and partial repastoralization.⁴¹ But the ethnographic frame of his narrative did not allow him to grasp the parameters of socio-political organization accurately and eventually led to the discursive abasement of Tjongoha who, although had established himself as the leading dignitary in Kaoko Otavi,⁴² remained an anonymous "chief" in Vedder's report. Oral information reversed this process and inserted the missionary's intervention precisely in the context of the constitution of Tjongoha's political leadership in the period.⁴³

The change in colonial power after World War I and major Manning's two military expeditions to Kaoko in 1917 and 1919 hardened colonial interests in Kaoko Otavi and increased the ambivalence of its status in the region. Manning's description of Kaoko Otavi

³⁸ E.g. Stals (1991), p. xxvi. Also see NAN A 560, Franke Diary, January – 18. August 1907, p. 180.

³⁹ Rudner (2006), p. 91.

⁴⁰ NAN BOU B10Q – Landverkäufe Kaokoveld, 1897–1913, Bericht des Polizeisergeanten Rüdiger, 6.6.1911 and Bericht über eine Reise zur Erkundung des Kaokoveldes, 4.11.1912, the latter making scanty reference to Africans residing in Kaoko Otavi.

⁴¹ ELCRN Missionar Heinrich Vedder an den Bezirkshauptmann von Zastrow, Gaub, 1.9.1914. The report has been discussed in part I.

⁴² Oral information, particularly if provided by women, referred to Tjongoha as the most respected man, due to his social and economic status, his significance in ritual life and his age. Interview with Emily Kazombaruru Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002, interview with Kuairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002.

⁴³ "When the missionary came and took a photograph of Tjongoha, he made him chief". This wording and variations of it cropped up repeatedly in interviews done in Kaoko Otavi. E.g. interview with Ngankurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002. Tjongoha is also known as Hinunu or Tjut in oral accounts. His intended successor, his sister's son Upani, who played a significant role in the elephant shooting case, is mentioned by name in Vedder's report.

took up and reinforced elements of the German discourse. As we shall see, the genealogy of European presence with its Boer origins remained of importance, as much as the potential to function as a centre of administration and policing:

The surrounding country is rather trodden out and stony but the place [Kaoko Otavi] seems suitable and well situated geographically for police control of [the] Kaokoveld which it is understood was contemplated by [the] late German Government when reserving the ground to substitute the isolated Zesfontein Post.⁴⁴

Kaoko Otavi's specific status within late German and early South African colonial policy, which would resonate far into the 1920s, had its contemporary counterpart in a process of growing contestation of the place among the local African communities. As we saw earlier on, the immigrations from Angola, which involved large groups of people and herds, initiated a process of fundamental social transformation affecting the entire region, albeit variable in space and in scale.⁴⁵ Our discussion of the case will trace the specific conditions and constellations under which the settlement of immigrants at Kaoko Otavi took place and explore the political rivalries and competing claims to control over people, economic and social capital and over the natural resources that it triggered.

Significantly, the frictions within the local African community remained beyond colonial perception and understanding up to the early 1920s, when the administration began to impose its reserves policy. Although Kaoko Otavi had grown into an important residential centre and would receive a second group of immigrants in 1929, because of the forced removals in southern Kaoko, this part of the region remained outside the three northern reserves, which were eventually demarcated and assigned to Tom, Katiti and Kakurukouje in 1923.⁴⁶ The presence of a number of wealthy and powerful families, among them the Mutates, who had immigrated from Angola and from southern Kaoko, would nevertheless refute the South African authorities' claim to put Kaoko Otavi and its inhabitants under Vita Tom's sphere of control and political tutelage. We shall come back to the implications and repercussions of this process of attempted subjection. In other words, the elephant shooting case emerged as an important case, precisely because it resulted from the overlapping of political and social friction within the local African community and significant interventions by the colonial authorities, both within and beyond the realm of the law.

⁴⁴ NAN SWAA 2516, Major C.N. Manning, Second report by Major Manning re second tour to Kaokoveld; Disarmament; General, Ondonga, 25.8.1919, p.4.

⁴⁵ See part I.

⁴⁶ NAN LAN – NRC – commission of inquiry into, Manning, Memorandum regarding Native Reserves Commission Report dated 8.6.1921, 25.8.1921, p. 5. In a sketch map of the three northern reserves in Kaoko Michael Bollig wrongly included Kaoko Otavi into the territory assigned to Vita Tom by the Reserves Commission in 1923. See Bollig (1998b), p. 514.

3.2. Game and entangled hunting economies

The very beginning of the elephant shooting case was marked by an offence against the laws sanctioning the shooting of game in the region – indeed, an animal had been killed and Africans had allegedly been involved in the transgression. Big game and hunting generally figure prominently as an issue, both in colonial and oral narratives from Kaoko. There is a tension between these two accounts in terms of the way in which the socio-economic significance of game and game management is presented.

The colonial narrative on game and hunting reached a climax in the late 19th century, when Kaoko became part of an expanding commercial frontier.⁴⁷ Game and big game in particular became an asset of transregional transactions, which involved goods such as ivory, ostrich feathers and eggs to be exchanged for cattle, guns and liquor. Commercial hunting became an arena of deep entanglement among Africans, Boers and Europeans. Reports from the late 19th century acknowledged the significance of hunting for the various communities in Kaoko for both subsistence and trade. Missionary Böhm arriving in the north-western area in the 1870s noted that “king” Uixamab and followers in Sesfontein had made hunting one of their main revenues, and that game had gained as much importance as cattle all over the region.⁴⁸ The prevalence of hunting game in the region far into the 20th century was also acknowledged by Heinrich Vedder. Kaoko Otavi’s economy, according to the missionary’s account, was based on a sophisticated diversification, including stock rearing, cultivation and hunting.⁴⁹ Vedder claimed that people’s prioritizing hunting prevented them from using the exceptional amount of water provided by the spring for large-scale cultivation. Yet, the revenues remained rather low in view of the lack of modern technologies, i.e. guns, and while he estimated the circulation of arms to be rather low in central Kaoko, this was by far the case further north, and the missionary claimed that the large quantities of arms introduced from Angola by Africans had substantially depleted game stocks in northern Kaoko.

Vedder’s argument reflected the colonial ambivalence in the early 20th century. On the one hand, game was considered to be worthy of state protection and the inclusion of a large part of Kaoko into the nature reserve in 1907⁵⁰ was an expression of the conservation narrative reaching the north-western area.⁵¹ Linked to the game protection paradigm was

⁴⁷ See part I.

⁴⁸ Böhm (1878), p. 75.

⁴⁹ ELCRN Missionar Heinrich Vedder an den Bezirkshauptmann von Zastrow, Gaub, 1.9.1914.

⁵⁰ See part I.

⁵¹ On the significance of protecting big game for the constitution of colonial states and the pursuing of economic interests see e.g. Van Sittert, L. (2005), Bringing in the Wild: The Commodification of Wild Animals in the Cape Colony/Province c. 1850–1950. *The Journal of African History*, 46: 269–291; or Tropp, J. (2002), Dogs, Poison and the Meaning of Colonial Intervention in the Transkei, South Africa. *The Journal of African History*, 43: 451–472.

the alleged uncontrolled depletion of game stocks by Africans and by European and Boer entrepreneurs and adventurers,⁵² which undermined the colonial state's claim to game management. With South Africa taking over and the gradual increase of colonial presence in the area, a further issue entered the debates around game stocks in Kaoko. For example, while Manning perpetuated the problem of Africans shooting game, and big game in particular, the two military expeditions under his aegis went hand in hand with hunting. "Shooting for the pot", i.e. the ideological legitimization of killing game for nutritional purpose only, was part and parcel of early South African colonial penetration into Kaoko⁵³ and, while it remained the privilege of police and the administration's elite in the late 1910s and early 1920s, it would, as we shall see, increasingly spread throughout large parts of the male settler society.⁵⁴

Game protection became an arena of state constitution particularly when commissioner Hahn took over. In his annual reports to the secretary for the protectorate, Hahn increasingly dedicated extended sections to game stocks in Kaoko, thereby not shrinking from providing the central authorities with up to date expertise:

It can be said that the Kaokoveld is the South West Africa home of at least three species of the big mammals, viz., elephant, rhino and giraffe. Other species of big game are also plentiful in parts. They are eland, wildebeest, mountain zebra, Burchells zebra, kudu, gemsbok, hartebeest, roan antelope, Angolan impala, and hippo. Small game includes springbok, klip springer, dik-dik, steenbok, duiker etc. // Since the Kaokoveld natives were disarmed some ten years ago, game has steadily increased especially giraffe which formerly were relentlessly hunted by European poachers and natives because of their valuable hides. Elephant and rhino too were frequently indiscriminately shot and there was an ever present danger of their being exterminated. Any natives found hunting or destroying game are at once dealt with by the chiefs who fully understand the wishes of the Administration in regard to game preservation. A very watchful eye has been kept by the Police, particularly in regard to this subject, and during the year not a single instance has come to light where natives have been found guilty of game destruction, and the free way in which game roams about the country is proof that it is not interfered with.⁵⁵

Ironically, as we shall see, the commissioner's assessment would dramatically change when the elephant shooting case cropped up.

⁵² Some of whom were prosecuted or removed from Kaoko, such as de Flamingh. See Bollig (1998b), p. 525.

⁵³ Henrichsen, D. (2000), *Pilgrimages into Kaoko. Herrensafaris, 4x4s and Settler Illusions*. In Henrichsen & Miescher, pp. 159–85.

⁵⁴ See Loo, T. (2001), *Of Moose and Men: Hunting for Masculinities in British Columbia, 1880–1939*. *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 3: 297–319.

⁵⁵ NAN NAO 18, annual and monthly reports, 1924–30, Hahn to secretary, 12.12.1928, pp. 19–20.

Oral narratives on game and hunting in central Kaoko and particularly in the area of Kaoko Otavi do share some of the concerns in the colonial debates, while they allow for the perception of further factors in the constitution of a society's valuing and handling of wildlife. Many praise songs about Kaoko Otavi refer to the spring as a site of game concentration and to the frequency of elephant and rhino coming to the waters.⁵⁶ In these oral narratives, large and big game become elements in a broader visual repertoire of ecological knowledge production, referring to specific landscapes, sites and regional variations of flora and fauna.⁵⁷ Beyond the significance game has within oral geographies, the perspective of pastoralists on game and game management was obviously determined by the potential rivalry between game and small and large stock, particularly in view of the fragile environment and the limited availability of water resources and pastures. Furthermore, Veder's reference to the lack of interest in cultivation he claimed to have noticed in Kaoko Otavi in 1914 was less rooted in the priority of hunting than in the local community's experience with big game and elephant, in particular, destroying fields and gardens under cultivation.⁵⁸ Danger and damage caused by big game, both to vegetation and human life, is a recurrent theme in oral accounts referring to the early 20th century, not least because the ownership of arms had become illegal and hence the means of protection much more constrained.⁵⁹

A further issue explored in oral narratives on hunting concerns contested rights to hunting as a means of constituting social, political and gender status.⁶⁰ As we shall see, the organization and control of shooting game became a shared interest between the colonial administration and the political elite in the region, both using the restrictions on access to wildlife as a subsistence and commercial resource in terms of subjection and control. The colonial narrative is very strong on this and throughout the 1920s Hahn repeatedly stressed the unrestrained commitment by the headmen to force their subjects to obey the

⁵⁶ Interview with Kuairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002 and 6.5.2002, interview with Emily Kazombaru Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 10.5.2002.

⁵⁷ Otjijandjasemo, the headquarters of Vita Tom in the 1920s and 30s, and a place with big permanent springs too, is also praised in terms of local game stocks. Interview with Mariri Koviti Tjihura, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002. Praise songs about Oruwandja, in the vicinity of Kaoko Otavi, in contrast refer to the vegetation and the trees growing there. Interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002.

⁵⁸ The reports by the police in Tshimhaka repeatedly referred to this rivalry, see NAN PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–31; Interview with David Humu, Kaoko Otavi, 12.1.2002, interview with Kuairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002, interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.2.2002.

⁵⁹ The defence to keep dogs in southern Kaoko in the aftermath of the removals of 1929 (see Part II) was not least an issue in terms of protection of herds against carnivores.

⁶⁰ See Loo (2001).

law. Indeed, limiting the possession of arms to a few selected men with political power had been part and parcel of Manning's policy of disarmament and was continued by his successor Hahn. Oral information on game management and the social organization of wildlife use blur the perception of exclusive masculinity linked to hunting. We have referred to the historical linkage of trade, gathering and hunting, which involved groups of men and women.⁶¹ When missionaries Vedder and Trey arrived in central Kaoko, they were fortunate to meet a group of men and women, among them Upani, who were on their way to the Etosha pan area on a trade and hunting trip.⁶² Oral accounts stress the continuity of hunting as part of subsistence economies, yet they reflect the shifts brought about with colonialism solidifying. Indeed, the centralization of power, the demarcation of reserves and hence the allocation of territories to single headmen or chiefs and the hampering of the trade and circulation of arms in the region, reframed negotiations about who had the right to hunt, which species and under which conditions. The significance of game as food, particularly in times of crisis,⁶³ as well as the protection of herds from attacks by carnivores, remained, although colonial legislation was increasingly applied and its influence felt in the region by the late 1920s.⁶⁴

The above considerations sketch the historical backdrop against which the emergence of the elephant shooting case and the narratives, which evolved around it, have to be read. While illegal hunting was the offence the administration was dealing with in the beginning, the genesis of the legal case, the sanctions chosen and the verdicts eventually agreed upon were by far limited to the prosecution of individuals who had not obeyed the laws regulating the use of game resources. As we shall see, the case records and oral information have to be understood in terms of a specific form and idiom of addressing and handling social and political friction, both by the local community in Kaoko Otavi and in the region as a whole, and by the colonial state.

⁶¹ See part I and II.

⁶² ELCRN Missionar Heinrich Vedder an den Bezirkshauptmann von Zastrow, Gaub, 1.9.1914.

⁶³ Interview with David Humu, Kaoko Otavi, 12.1.2002, interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Ojetje/Kaoko Otavi, 7.5.2002.

⁶⁴ Interview with Ngankurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 8.5.2002, interview with Salomon Hartley, 11.1.2002. By the early 1930s, the colonial authorities began to provide headmen in Kaoko with poison, as a substitute for the shooting of game. See NAN PTJ 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondonga, 1926–31.

4. Colonial narratives – the case records and the problem of indigenous voices

Since the 1990s there has been a growing concern with colonial court records in African social history.⁶⁵ The paradox of these sources lies in the tension between their emerging out of a context in which Africans prominently acted and spoke as litigants or witnesses, yet their voices and acts were “profoundly shaped by the procedures of the court and by the circumstances surrounding the transformation of testimony into text”.⁶⁶ Beyond the specific instance of the court, the colonial setting has led to widespread scepticism by historians of documents produced in contexts controlled and determined by agents of the state.⁶⁷ The narrative of colonial court records is often considered particularly distorted and their value for the reconstruction of the past, let alone for the ‘recovering’ of subaltern voices and actions, is seen to be problematic, if not questionable.⁶⁸ The methodological and historiographical challenges emerging from the use of court records have recently been addressed by Richard Roberts in his discussion of colonial courts in the French Soudan in the late 19th and early 20th century.⁶⁹ His concern has first been to contextualize negotiations in a court case as one form within broader contexts of African strategies of dispute and of a longer pattern of social interaction. Indeed the privileging of a single case and the focus on the limited context of the court, to which but a small fraction of litigations made their way through, is problematic.⁷⁰ Roberts argues for an analysis of how colonial institutions changed landscapes of power and how Africans negotiated these new terrains.⁷¹ Colonial law and colonial courts were indeed arenas, which provided specific means to reframe social relations, both between the colonized and the colonizers as well as within African societies.

⁶⁵ For a bibliographical discussion see Dickerman, C. (1990), Court records in Africana research. *History in Africa*, 17: 305–318. Pioneering examples have been Hay, M. J. & Wright, M. (1982), *African Women and the Law*. Boston; Roberts, R. & Mann, K. (1991), *Law in Colonial Africa*. Portsmouth, London; Penn, N. (1999), *Rogues, Rebels and Runaways. Eighteenth-century Cape Characters*. Cape Town; Martin Chanock’s (1998) *Law, Custom and Social Order. The Colonial Experience in Malawi and Zambia*. Portsmouth; and his (2001) *The Making of South African Legal Culture 1902–1936. Fear, Favour and Prejudice*. Cambridge, have a stronger focus on legal history. Historical and anthropological scholarship on so-called customary law has been much more extensive.

⁶⁶ Roberts, R. (1990), Text and testimony in the Tribunal de Première Instance, Dakar, during the early twentieth century. *Journal of African History*, 31: 447–463, here p. 450.

⁶⁷ Natalie Zemon Davis makes this point beyond the colonial context. See Zemon Davis, N. (1987), *Fiction in the Archives. Pardon Tales and their Tellers in 16th Century France*. Stanford, p. 18.

⁶⁸ See e.g. Rathbone (1989), p. 450.

⁶⁹ Roberts, R. (2005), *Litigants and Households. African Disputes and Colonial Courts in the French Soudan, 1895–1912*. Portsmouth.

⁷⁰ Roberts (2005), p. 8.

⁷¹ Roberts (2005), p. 14.

Yet, these negotiations remained embedded in local systems of inequality and it is precisely the wider socio-political context constituting the backdrop against which single court cases have to be read and interpreted.⁷² Roberts' interest has furthermore concerned the question of African voices raised above, and his discussion echoes the methodological perspectives developed by Natalie Zemon Davis in her *Fiction in the Archives* and by Carlo Ginzburg in his *The Judge and the Historian*.⁷³ Processes of transformation and translation come to the fore, which are seen as negotiations between various agents involved, i.e. witnesses, perpetrators, judges and clerks, as well as interaction between different systems of narrative order and cultural knowledge production.

This literature frames my analysis of the archival material on the elephant and murder cases in colonial Kaoko. The documents include various types of texts, ranging from correspondence between the colonial officers involved, police reports, recorded statements and a few letters written by some of the accused.⁷⁴ This variety depends on the way administrative procedures were to be documented. As the cases evolved over a period of several years, there were different stages of reporting, documenting and assessing, and different people involved, be it policemen in the area or the magistrate based outside Kaoko. In fact, most of the inquiry took place outside the actual courtroom, i.e. the circuit court in Otjiwarongo where it was eventually settled in 1935. Most statements of witnesses were recorded during the preliminary investigation of the cases. It is this particular type of text I am concerned with, its nature and the ways in which it raises questions about the place of African voices and narrativity in colonial archives. I do not consider these statements to constitute "oral information" from the past, let alone that they make African voices accessible *per se* and *unmediated* to the contemporary historian.⁷⁵ Court cases provide an incomplete and fractured view of the context in which things happened, and their representation of social relationships linking the accused to victims and witnesses remains rudimentary.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, this case study is an example of an African community using the colonial legal arena as a site for negotiation, for social friction and dispute.⁷⁷ But rather than recovering vestiges of

⁷² Roberts & Mann (1991), p. 43.

⁷³ Ginzburg, C. (2002a), *The Judge and the Historian: Marginal Notes on a Late-Twentieth-Century Miscarriage of Justice*. London, New York. I am using the German translation Ginzburg, C. (1991), *Der Richter und der Historiker. Überlegungen zum Fall Sofri*. Berlin.

⁷⁴ Usually in Otjiherero, less in Afrikaans. Some of the letters have been translated into English or Afrikaans by the colonial officers involved in the cases, while others were summarised.

⁷⁵ My point here is to suggest a direction other than the one engaged with by e.g. Nigel Penn who, while remaining cautious, insists: "Despite certain problems the court records of the VOC constitute an invaluable body of evidence. Nowhere else are the voices of the oppressed and vanquished – distorted though they might be – heard so clearly", Penn (1999), pp. 5–6.

⁷⁶ Roberts (1990), p. 461.

⁷⁷ Rathbone (1989), p. 457; Roberts & Mann (1991), p. 32; Roberts (2005), p. 2.

individual African voice and practice, I will suggest a reading and interpretation of these archival materials which approaches agency as embedded in narrativity.⁷⁸ What I am concerned with, therefore, are the ways in which experiences of African men and women have been organized into accounts serving above all the colonial need for truth and evidence. Yet, the narrative remained infused by the specific context in which its terms and parameters were negotiated.

4.1. Colonial jurisdiction and the coming of the law⁷⁹

It has been argued that the emergence of a colonial society in Kaoko under South African rule followed parameters developed and applied in the central northern areas of Owambo. Colonialism in northern Namibia anchored itself in the demarcation and definition of stable tribal areas and territories, on the identification and appointment of reliable political counterparts, who as chiefs or headmen would apply the laws and interests of indirect rule. A set of legislation passed since the mid-1920s would furthermore endow regional leaders with the means to supervise, control and sanction the mobility of people and of stock⁸⁰ and, eventually, create structural conditions in which the colonial authorities would determine the main goals pursued in the respective regions under control.⁸¹ But in contrast to Owambo, Kaoko lacked the human potential to be exploited as a labour reservoir and its peripheral status in terms of its value for the colonial economy and society continued to frame ambiguous policies up to the mid-1930s.⁸² Nevertheless, the local authorities and, most prominently, native commissioner Hahn insisted on establishing a successful and ideal colonial administration in the north-western region, no less than he claimed to do in Owambo; the implementation of colonial laws became, therefore, a crucial issue.⁸³

The enforcement of a law-abiding culture in the northern territories became a highly problematic and very ambivalent balancing act which was, as we shall see, very much determined by requirements resulting on the ground. In Kaoko, the coexistence of formal colonial legislation and so-called customary law, which was by far restricted to colonial, let alone northern Namibia, emerged under specific conditions, framed not least by the comparatively recent constitution of centralized political leadership. Customary law, as a means of rule and control under colonialism, had to be redefined and redesigned and, as in most

⁷⁸ For a much more elaborated discussion of shifting concepts of agency in African historiography see Lalu (2000), p. 48.

⁷⁹ McKittrick (2002), p. 171.

⁸⁰ Gordon, R. J. (1998), Vagrancy, Law & 'Shadow Knowledge'. In Hayes et al, pp. 51–76.

⁸¹ See Hayes (1992), pp. 297ff.; McKittrick (2002), p. 170.

⁸² As discussed in Part III.

⁸³ Silvester et al (1998), p. 22.

parts of the northern reserves in Kaoko too, jurisdiction in general increasingly altered into a static and rigid system of incontestable legislation⁸⁴ – with highly questionable aims, as we shall see.

We have already explored aspects of the judicial contents and competence of the headmen in Kaoko, which by the mid-1920s were increasingly backed by and dependent on the support of the colonial authorities in the region.⁸⁵ The pastoral economy constituted a realm in which social and economic conflicts cropped up regularly, and the continuity of numerous cattle cases fought over by individuals from all ranks of society, men and women, impressively reflect the dynamics and workings of social conflict resolution. Conflicts around the distribution of herds, stock property, inheritance and cattle loans as well as access to pastures and water resources were dealt with by the so-called traditional authorities and no doubt fell under customary law. That is, as long as these issues did not interfere with the reserves and buffer policies; if they did, the colonial state would, as we saw earlier, take over and attend cases of border transgressions by herds via corresponding legislation, be it laws defining prohibited areas or veterinarian regulations.⁸⁶ The sanctions applied by the headmen in cases where they would convict and prosecute individuals for any offence regarding livestock husbandry, property rights or resource management, usually ranged from cattle fines to compulsory work services, be it as herders or agricultural workers and, at times, included corporal punishment. Indeed, the question of physical violence as a means of jurisdiction and social sanctioning of offenders became an issue of deep ambivalence and contradiction in the handling by and narrative of the colonial administration; the elephant shooting and murder of a witness in the late 1920s in Kaoko Otavi being a case in point.

In colonial Kaoko poaching of big game, manslaughter and murder⁸⁷ were classified as severe offences and consequently fell under the administration's direct jurisdiction, and not under customary law applied by local authorities.⁸⁸ In theory, this meant that the native commissioner, assisted by the police would take up investigation then, if necessary, involve the magistrate concerned and, worst case given, the offenders would be taken to the circuit

⁸⁴ McKittrick (2002), p. 170.

⁸⁵ See Parts II and III.

⁸⁶ As discussed in Part III.

⁸⁷ On the claim to jurisdiction by colonial authorities with regard to murder cases, see Wright, M. (1982), Justice, women and the social order in Abercorn, northeastern Rhodesia, 1897–1903. In Hay & Wright, p. 39.

⁸⁸ The hierarchies of legal institutions and competence were thoroughly assessed by C.H.L. Hahn, who considered himself to be the only one entitled to investigate the cases in Kaoko Otavi. See e.g. NAN NAO 28–24/1/1 – Hahn to the Post Commander SWA Police, Ondangwa, 11.7.1930. For a general discussion of legal institutions and procedures in colonial Namibia see Sippel, H., Rechtsrezeption in Namibia. Prozesse direkter und indirekter Rezeption deutschen und südafrikanischen Rechts. *Recht in Afrika*: 69–89.

court. Yet in practice these regulations and their implementation varied⁸⁹ and were seemingly decided upon from case to case.⁹⁰ While here too cattle fees and other penalties often proved effective, the application of further sanctions depended on how events developed. Murder was handled in colonial and traditional courts, provided the offenders and victims could be identified. The number of police and colonial officers stationed in Kaoko in the 1920s and 1930s was, as we saw, very low⁹¹ and they were not in a condition to investigate activities in the reserve considered to be illegal or criminal.⁹² They were forced to rely on information delivered by residents, be they civilians or headmen and chiefs.

4.2. Recorded statements – exploring the legal narrative

Hence, the emergence of the recorded statements as genre: the written outcome of an interrogation process, which has been preserved in the archives. Most information on who participated in the process is however absent or has been suppressed.⁹³ Interrogations were done in various languages, depending on language competency and the availability of translators.⁹⁴

One of the statements given by Willem Hartley is an example of the specific narrative emerging in the context of this criminal investigation:

Copy://Case Disappearance Petrus Kakuyu//Statement Willem Hartley//Adult male – Coloured.// Willem Hartley states:// I reside at Oruwandjai in the Kaokoveldt. In 1930 the Native Commissioner of Ovamboland had a case against Thomas Mutate for Elephant shooting in which one Petrus Kakuyu figured.//This Petrus Kakuyu disappeared since under the following circumstances: On the very first visit to Om-

⁸⁹ Meredith McKittrick states that in colonial northern Namibia, then Ovamboland, most murder cases were dealt within native tribunals. See McKittrick, M. (1999), *Faithful daughter, murdering mother: transgression and social control in colonial Namibia*. *Journal of African History*, 40: pp. 265–283, here p. 266. On the tensions between ideology and practice in the application of colonial law see Roberts & Mann (1991), p. 35.

⁹⁰ This assessment is based on my general knowledge of the archival material on colonial Kaoko. I have not done a quantitative analysis of all cases concerning Kaoko and their respective handling in customary and colonial courts.

⁹¹ Two policemen, du Buisson and Cogill, and 1–3 so-called native constables. See NAN PJT 1 4/R, monthly reports Ondagua. Besides Tshimhaka, which had been opened in 1926 on the northern Kunene River, there was a temporary police post in southern Kaoko at Otjitundua, which was closed down in 1934.

⁹² The lack of sufficient administrative personnel in Kaoko was a constant theme in Hahn's reporting on the area. The native commissioner, who was based in Ondangwa in then Owamboland, only rarely went on trips to the north-western area.

⁹³ This has been confirmed for archival documentation on a criminal case in Owambo in the late 1930s discussed in McKittrick (1999), p. 276.

⁹⁴ Translators were hardly ever mentioned. The main one we know was Willem Hartley, himself residing close to Kaoko Otavi at Oruwandjai, and involved in both cases as witness. Hartley would emerge as one of the key figures in this period.

bombo in May (the 30th) we had been discussing the matter with Thomas Mutate on the road when he told me he would like to kill Petrus Kakuyu to do away with him as he is only going to give away other things, put him in trouble and also for the reason that he Petrus Kakuyu has stated that he Thomas Mutate shot the elephant on a certain day towards sunset.//I Willem Hartley said if you do that I shall report you, after this I went home to Oruwandjai.//The(n) came a period that Thomas Mutate and Oorlog made out that Petrus Kakuyu is mad and one day in my presence Oorlog and Thomas taught him to make a statement to Sgt. Cogill that he was dying owing to a hit he received from Sgt. du Buisson. This was done. The day before Mr. Hahn visited Kaokoveldt (Kaoko-Otavi) Petrus Kakuyu, I heard, had disappeared into the bush.⁹⁵

The extract from the statement of Hartley exemplifies the scale of formalism and fabrication. It was reached through a process, which involved several authors,⁹⁶ the person questioned, the policeman, native commissioner or magistrate, and a translator. First, the statement was translated from a local language, usually but not exclusively Otjiherero, into English or Afrikaans. This translation is most visible in shifting uses of first and third person, of names of people and places, i.e. the continuous classification of people as 'native' and the adaptation of individual and place names according to administrative knowledge.⁹⁷ In general, it had to be framed in terms of the requirements of a criminal investigation, with its need to structure events in particular ways, to establish *the* truth and to provide unambiguous evidence.⁹⁸ All statements followed a simple scheme:⁹⁹ they would start with the person's name (often the first name only), followed by the gendered ethnic classification,¹⁰⁰ the place of residence and the social relation linking the speaker to the accused or the victim. The subsequent part would ideally contain a chronological account of events, places and persons involved, eye-witness or hearsay information.¹⁰¹ Often, the flow of narrative was inter-

⁹⁵ NAN NAO 28 – 24/1/1, n.d. (1934). The spelling is in the original.

⁹⁶ Zemon Davis (1987), pp. 15ff. In contrast to Zemon Davis' claim that the petitioner asking for the king's pardon was the main author, the colonial documents I am concerned with here do not allow for a hierarchy of influences on the text. In fact, I am more interested in the text and in issues raised therein rather than on the question of who exactly was speaking/writing.

⁹⁷ E.g. Oorlog instead of Vita Tom or Harunga, the name he was known by locally, or Thomas Mutate instead of Katjitoha.

⁹⁸ See on this point Ginzburg (1991) p. 28ff.; and Roberts & Mann (1991), p. 42.

⁹⁹ I do not know if there were any schedules or forms the questionings of witnesses were based on, or if methods of criminal investigation had been part of the professional training of policemen stationed in Kaoko in this period. Due to the conformity of language of most statements in the cases dealt with I suspect C.H.L. Hahn to have been the final editor of them. Both policemen, Sgt. Cogill and Sgt. du Buisson were limited in their English writing.

¹⁰⁰ Men were always labelled "native", while women always as "native woman". On the use of gendered categories in "native policies", see Manicom (1992), p. 456.

¹⁰¹ I am referring here to the necessity of translating every-day experience into the categories of legal discourses. See on this point Mertz, E. (1994), *Legal language. Pragmatics, poetics, and social*

rupted by references to things, which lay beyond the realm of the case as such, yet were not eliminated in the course of the textual transformation. These extensions make the recorded statements appear as mixed genres, floating between crude listings of alleged facts, judicial assessments and socio-political and historical representations.¹⁰² Finally, all the statements had a formalized closure, which underlined the witness' credibility – formulated as "That's all I know" or "I do not know more about it" – followed by the signature of the authors involved,¹⁰³ and the place and date of the recording. While all statements corresponded to the general formal structure, they varied substantially in length, contents and the construction of narrative competence. These differences depended most of all on gender,¹⁰⁴ resulting in statements by women usually being very short and limited with regard to the cases, but also to information given on social and political issues. Furthermore, the social status of the person questioned and his or her involvement with the colonial administration substantially determined the latitude given to witnesses to tell their accounts fully and in depth.¹⁰⁵ Consequently, the statements attributed to men such as Tom, Mutate and Hartley produced information on a wide range of issues and concerns, while the statements given by Kakuyu's wife and other women remained, as we shall see, comparatively faceless and flat.

5. Negotiating gender

Let me come back to the question of content and context raised at the beginning. Neither of the parties involved engaged coherently with the cases. The way in which the legal investigation was constructed tended to isolate the events debated from longer patterns of interaction. Those involved knew each other, they had been members of the same community over decades and would continue to be after the closing of the cases.¹⁰⁶ It is these social relations which shaped their actions and arguments and which gave meaning to them. But rather than suggesting that the colonial and the local narratives developed separately, that there would have been a colonial reading in contrast to an indigenous one, I would argue that various interwoven narratives constituted ambiguous contexts of action and speech in

power. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 23: 435–455.

¹⁰² The concept of the mixed genre is again based on Zemon Davis' discussion of letters of redemption.

¹⁰³ Unless the hand-written notes are kept in the archive, with the original signatures or marks, most transcriptions of the statements lack the original signature.

¹⁰⁴ See Zemon Davis (1987), p. 101; Mertz (1994), p. 443; Roberts (2005), p. 24.

¹⁰⁵ Zemon Davis hints at the compression of legal narratives, confining witnesses to tell what they have seen or heard about a crime only. Zemon Davis (1987), p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ See Roberts & Mann (1991), p. 45, and Roberts (2005), p. 8.

which all developed the strategies most sensible to them.¹⁰⁷ As we shall see, the elephant and murder cases signified shifts in the definition and constitution of gender, power and authority, whilst echoing concerns with resistance to male dominance.¹⁰⁸

5.1. Challenges to male authority

The three main protagonists involved in these cases were Mutate, Tom and Hahn. The formal settlement of the cases in the mid-1930s saw Hahn emerging as the strengthened administrative key figure, while Mutate and Tom were sent to prison. The dramatic outcome marked the end of decades of shifting relationships, which had linked the men to each other as members of the emerging colonial elite in Kaoko. While the narratives of the legal cases were orchestrated around the question of the felonies and the perpetrators, what had indeed been negotiated between them were issues of political authority and of control over people and resources and, as I will argue, over violence and knowledge.

In the beginning, the conflict evolved around the question of poaching, involving Mutate, Upani and Hahn. Their rivalry concerned a variety of issues beyond the case. In his recorded statement Upani accused Mutate of killing the elephant; his statement also raised some of the underlying friction between the two men:

Native Opani X Examined by Mr Hahn states: -// I reported the shooting of the elephant because I was afraid and partly because I am being treated unfairly by Headman Thomas: He wants me to pay a debt which was settled long ago. It was settled by the Magistrate. It was about sheep. I handed in the rifles (muzzle loaders) because I was afraid of becoming involved in the shooting of the elephant. I know that Thomas would do me harm. He would kill me if it were not for Chief Oorlog's protection. I left Kaoko-Otavi to live at Omuhiba because of Thomas (...)// My son Tshikundu told me later that the elephant was dead. He also told me that he had seen the tusks at Kambonde's house. Kambonde is Thomas' brother and lives next door to him.// I handed over the rifles to the Sergeant at Tshimhaka because I was afraid that I would be drawn into this case. The guns came into my possession through Thomas. (...)// I know that Thomas has a Government rifle but there are one or two others. I have seen a short rifle (carbine) with Thomas's herd(er) Kamunika. The latter carries it when he goes out with Thomas' stock. I have heard that Kambonde also owns a rifle. It is a muzzle loader. It was bought from an Ovambo in the year of the locusts (1925) by native Hiakathorowa of Kaoko-Otavi. A sheep and a goat were paid for it. (...)// He was my Headman. He has taken my property and that is why I have gone against him. No one advised me to take this step. (...)// Native Opani/His X Mark// Read over

¹⁰⁷ On the colonial and local narratives mutually constituting each other see Moore, H.L. & Vaughan, M. (1994), *Cutting Down Trees. Gender, Nutrition, and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890–1990*. Portsmouth, p xxi.

¹⁰⁸ Roberts (1990), p. 461.

interpreted and assented to before me at Kaoko Otavi this date 3/9/30/(Sgd) C. Hugo Hahn.// O/C, Native Affairs, Ovamboland.¹⁰⁹

The conflict between Upani and Mutate had been part and parcel of shifting colonial interpretations of the political landscape of Kaoko since the mid-1910s. From a colonial perspective it was an expression of political tensions, which were seen as the core challenge to a successful administration of the area. As we saw, it had determined the interventions in Kaoko by major Manning during his two military expeditions to the region in 1917 and 1919.¹¹⁰ The narrative initiated by Manning and recycled by Hahn in the early 1920s had led to the consolidation of Vita Tom and some followers, among them Mutate, as the main political leaders in the region. As representatives of a Herero society perceived to be powerful, wealthy and modernized in terms of culture and education, they were favoured over Ovatjimba, their “uncivilised” counterparts.¹¹¹ In Kaoko Otavi this policy had coincided with changing local demographic and power constellations. After the immigrations of people and their herds from southern Angola the new arrivals met a population, which had lost most of their possessions in a period of intense cattle raiding, yet was gradually rebuilding herds of stock.¹¹² Hence, the immigrants’ arrival and their claim to residential and political supremacy didn’t remain uncontested. Thomas Mutate crossed the Kunene into Kaoko around 1916.¹¹³ Archival documents give no information on why he settled at Kaoko Otavi.¹¹⁴ In contrast, oral information identified family networks to be the reason for Mutate’s decision.¹¹⁵ In the beginning, the immigrants’ settlement at Kaoko Otavi had been

¹⁰⁹ NAN NAO 28 24/1/1 – Recorded statement of Upani, taken by C.H.L. Hahn, Kaoko Otavi, 3.9.30

¹¹⁰ See part II; NAN ADM 156 W32, General Kaokoveld Report by Major C.N. Manning, Resident Commissioner Ovamboland, November 1917; SWAA 2516, Report by Major C.N. Manning re Second Tour Kaokoveld; Disarmament; General, 25.8.1919.

¹¹¹ The ethnic paradigm and hierarchy has been discussed in Part II. Also see Vedder, H. (1928), *The Ovaherero*. In Fourie, L. Hahn, C.H.L. & Vedder, H. (eds), *The Native Tribes of South West Africa*. Cape Town, pp. 153–211; NAN J XII b5, Heinrich Vedder, ‘Reisebericht des Missionars Vedder and den Bezirksamtman von Zastrow’, *Geographische und ethnographische Forschungen im Kaokoveld 1900–1914*, (1914).

¹¹² See Part I.

¹¹³ NAN NAO 31 – 24/13 – Officer in Charge Opuwo to Chief Native Commissioner Windhoek, 25.6.1941; Green (1952), p. 50; interview with David Humu, Kaoko Otavi, 12.1.2002, David Humu dated his father’s coming to Kaoko Otavi around 1917/18, yet he settled there permanently a little later.

¹¹⁴ In the archive the earliest reports of the administration mention Thomas Mutate as one of Vita Tom’s headmen but they make no mention on his place of residence, see NAO 18, monthly and annual reports of the native commissioner Ondangua, 1924 and 1925. In 1926 Colonel Denys Reitz apparently met Mutate in Kaoko Otavi, see Green (1952), p. 50.

¹¹⁵ In oral information Thomas Mutate was said to have been given a place to stay at Kaoko Otavi by Tjongoha, the local headman and a maternal uncle to Mutate. Seemingly, it soon came to a serious power play between them, which led to Tjongoha’s and his followers’ expulsion from the

negotiated and was eventually accepted by the local community.¹¹⁶ Yet, Mutate's personal political interests, his alliance with Tom and the latter's successful career, soon enabled him to establish himself as the leading headman, supported by a colonial administration in the making.¹¹⁷

As we saw earlier on, in the first decade of South African rule, Tom and Mutate had been the wooed counterparts of a colonial administration, which lacked the means and personnel to establish direct control in Kaoko.¹¹⁸ By the late 1920s however, Hahn's perception of them had changed. Thomas Mutate had proved to be an unaccommodating figure for the native commissioner, who continuously challenged regulations and undermined the officer's authority.¹¹⁹ The elephant shooting case confirmed anew, in Hahn's revised view, Mutate's inherent "stubbornness". Game protection and management had been a site of contestation from the very beginning of colonialism in Kaoko, not least because it signified pre-colonial transregional African social and economic activities.¹²⁰ In the 1920s and 1930s the commercial exploitation and the cultural appropriation of game continued to be one of the arenas in which male rivalries unfolded. What Hahn, Mutate, Tom and Upani in fact negotiated was the question of who had the legitimacy to shoot game and, implicitly, to own guns. The linkage of hunting and the possession of arms was crucial for the men, hence its prominence as an issue in Upani's statement. As suggested above, in the administration's understanding things were clear: game shooting and particularly the killing of big game was neither allowed to African residents, nor to South African officers stationed in the reserve, or settlers and traders who entered Kaoko to shoot game.¹²¹ Exceptional permits

place. Interviews with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette, 7.5.2002, and with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Onjette, 10.1.2002.

¹¹⁶ See Part II.

¹¹⁷ In the archival sources Tjongoha's, and with him Upani's 'removal' from Kaoko Otavi, happened around 1918, without specifying what the context to their leaving the place was. See NAN NAO 28 – 24/1/1, statement of Thomas Mutate, 30.9.1930 and NAN LOU 1/2/2 – Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), No. 23, second statement of Ventuura Nejanena, n.d.

¹¹⁸ See Part II and McKittrick, M. (2003), *Forsaking their fathers? Colonialism, Christianity, and coming of age in Ovamboland, northern Namibia*. In Lindsay, L.A., & Miescher, S.F. (eds), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*. Portsmouth, 33–51, here p. 46.

¹¹⁹ NAN NAO 28 – 24/1/1 – Hahn to the Secretary for South West Africa 12.1.1934; NAN NAO 19, Hahn, monthly report January & February 1935, There had been several cases against Thomas Mutate earlier (see NAN NAO 28 – Vol. 3 – Hahn on cases against Thomas Mutate, 3.5. & 25.9.1934), the one mentioned in the statement of Upani was about a transaction of sheep in 1919/1920, see NAN NAO 28 – 2471/17, Hahn to the Magistrate Outjo, 28.9.1930.

¹²⁰ See Part I.

¹²¹ As said before Kaoko had been made part of a game reserve in 1907, i.e. since the German colonial period. The 'Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Südwestafrika betreffend Bildung von Wildreservaten in dem südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebiete' of 1907 (March 22nd 1907, No.

given out by the administration were the formal *sine qua non* of legal hunting activity in the north-western area.¹²² Access to guns and ammunition had been restricted to the chief and a few headmen. Tom and Mutate had apparently used their status in order to control access to arms to the benefit of their own political and economic interests.¹²³ Nevertheless, Upani's strategy, to use illicit game hunting and the involvement of the police and the native commissioner to challenge Mutate's hegemonic claim, remained unsuccessful. While Mutate failed to solve the conflict within the community,¹²⁴ his position as a headman sustained by the colonial government was temporarily, at least, reconfirmed if not strengthened.

Things changed, as we saw, when Petrus Kakuyu was allegedly killed. What was officially framed in terms of murder in accordance with the rule of colonial law, continued to mirror male rivalry.

Numerous statements recount the killing of Kakuyu and accuse Mutate and Tom of various forms of violence and intimidation towards their subjects, among them one attributed to Hiakatondo Katuta:

Petrus Kakuyu's disappearance was planned by both Oorlog and mostly Thomas Mutate, as will be seen out of the conversation I overheard and other circumstances.// Firstly: on a certain date Thomas Mutate, Oorlog, Willem Hartley, myself and a party visited Sgt. Cogill at Ombombo, where we encountered Sgt. du Buisson. This was in 1930 about. On our Return journey I heard Thomas Mutate telling Willem Hartley that he would very much like to kill Petrus Kakuyu, but for Chief Oorlog. (...) //Thomas as Mutate called me aside one day and told me, that I myself, Karirondua and Vetuura must take Petrus Kakuyu to the bush, to kill and hide him. But however it was found that I was related to P. Kakuyu, and I was told to go to the Cattle Post instead, and Kamunika had to come in my place. Oorlog was all the time at Kaoko-Otavi when these things went on. // I went to the Cattle Post and the next thing I hear is from my wife who had remained at Kaoko-Otavi that P. Kakuyu has disappeared. A dance was given and two oxen killed according to Herero custom, to celebrate the death of the enemy Petrus Kakuyu (The so-called outoni cattle). // My wife Wapuka has since been forced away from me, by Thomas Mutate, less she gives out some information, to me, and to other people of authority. She as well as one Embura who has been in Thomas' Kraal all the time, when this things went on, Maaveereije Kakuyu's wife, Mavereruui-

88) prohibited all shooting of big game. Game protection laws were generally taken over by the South African administration in 1916, see Game Law of 6. January 1916.

¹²² See eg. NAN SWAA 2513, Kaokoveld General, 1926–54, Additional NC SWA to Chief NC, 26.4.1939 on permits to residents in Kaoko. Most travellers, missionaries, scientists and members of the settler society who ventured into Kaoko in the early decades of the 20th century often used the occasion for hunting activities. See Rizzo; L. (2005), A Glance into the Camera: gendered visions of historical photographs in Kaoko. *Gender & History*, 17: 682–713.

¹²³ NAN SWAA 493 – A 50/256/4, Hahn to the Secretary for South West Africa, 18.3.1938.

¹²⁴ NAN LOU 1/2/2 – No. 23, further statement of Ventuura Nejanena, n.d.

jani her sister and Twamunu Kakuyu's father in Law, are kept in custody by Thomas who watches their movements, afraid they will give away information. (...).¹²⁵

The performance, control and management of violence were integral in early colonial Kaoko. Experiences of violence had indeed shaped the biographies of men such as Tom, Mutate and Hahn. Mutate and Tom had acted as policemen and mercenaries in southern Angola, supporting the Portuguese authorities in their suppression of local resistance.¹²⁶ Later, their immigration and settlement in Kaoko had drawn them into raids, fighting and lootings.¹²⁷ Hahn too had received his training in arms and intelligence in the northern areas of the colony under the aegis of Manning.¹²⁸ The experience of armed intervention and conflict and, after 1917, an expanding colonial discourse of disarmament, paved the way in which these men negotiated the parameters of rule and control in Kaoko. The colonial stand on the question of arms and, linked to it, of exercising violence, was ambiguous. On the one hand, arms and uniforms signified power and status,¹²⁹ and martial symbols as part of strong masculinities were continuously reproduced, be it in intelligence reports by military officers¹³⁰ or in photographic portraiture.¹³¹ Indeed, the administration tended to support the headmen's exercise of power and application of controlled violence against their subjects, as long as it remained useful to the general colonial project.¹³² On the other hand, the discourse of pacification and the ideology of colonial law and order legitimized the colonizing project as an enterprise that would, at least partly, benefit ordinary Africans and protect them against the random exposure to authoritarian violence.¹³³ This ambiguity

¹²⁵ NAN NAO 20, monthly and annual reports 1937–1942, 24/1/1, statement of Hiakatondo Kututa, interpreted by Willem Hartley, recorded by Sgt. Cogill, Otjondjorese, 18.11.1934. The spelling is from the original.

¹²⁶ See Part I.

¹²⁷ See Part II.

¹²⁸ See Hayes, P. (1998b), Northern exposures: the photography of C.H.L. Hahn, native commissioner of Ovamboland 1915–1946. In Hartmann, W., Silvester, J., & Hayes, P. (eds.), *The Colonising Camera. Photographs in the Making of Namibian History*. Cape Town, pp. 171–187, here pp. 172–173.

¹²⁹ Both sustained in local African societies as well as in a colonial understanding.

¹³⁰ Such as discussed for the reports by Major Manning and in Hahn's descriptions in his diary of 1924, see NAN Accession 450 – 23D. 14, Kaokoveld Journey.

¹³¹ Particularly photographs of Vita Tom and his rivals such as Muhona Katiti followed this paradigm. See Rizzo (2005).

¹³² There were continuous debates on the question of corporal punishment and the ways chiefs and headmen ruled over their subjects. See e.g. NAN NAO 20, annual and monthly reports, Hahn, annual report 1937, 18.1.1938 and NAN NAO 29, Southern Kaokoveld Affairs, 1926–30, 24/2, Hahn to du Buisson, 17.9.1936, also the reports by the police stationed at Tshimhaka, between 1926 and 1931, filed under NAN PTJ 1 4/R. For a comparison with Owambo see McKittrick (1999), p. 275.

¹³³ Silvester et al (1998), p. 20.

gave meaning to the dualism of customary and colonial law and enabled the native commissioner to classify acts of violence predominantly in terms of their impact on colonial power and hegemony.¹³⁴

The enforcement of a colonial legal culture by the native commissioner proved difficult. In the realm of the law, the availability and circulation of knowledge became a bone of contention.¹³⁵ A letter written to Hahn by one of his police officers revealed the difficulties.

In the whole my investigations, are being hampered very much, and I cannot get any information that lead to a definite statement. But I would like to suggest the following scheme to be adopted, to try and get at the bottom of the Affair.// There is still present the Wife of P Kakuyu, her sister, Natives Embura, and another by the name of Vetuura who can give a light on the case. Especially the native Vetuura. If these natives could be arrested when you next visit the Kaoko-veldt, and taken to a isolated place, say Okorosave and there be interrogated by you, if possible in my presence the matter will come to light. // I am aware that the Native Vetuura knows quite a lot, for he was one of Thomas Mutates Chief Servants at the time. I have as a matter of fact, at an earlier date tried to get some information from him and the result was that Oorlog sent for him and he is now residing with Oorlog simply loafing about at Otji-jandjasemo, and I have the impression that his movements are being watched very much. (...) // My attempts to approach the woman of late P Kakuyu and her Sister have been frustrated, at many occasions I have even noted that my movements, when I visited Kaoko-Otavi, have been watched (...).¹³⁶

The ability to determine the narrative about a past event and its protagonists challenged all men involved. The arrangement of knowledge into a body of evidence became the site of power.¹³⁷ To Hahn and his policemen on the one hand, and Mutate, Tom and their adversaries on the other, the cases reinforced male spheres of action and speech, of politics and social expertise. Thomas Mutate and Vita Tom had been well aware of this from the very beginning of the investigation, and it was precisely the manipulation of knowledge, which led to Vita Tom's prosecution. The significance of controlling the narrative about an event under investigation by the legal bodies of the colonial state, revealed itself to the rivals of Tom and Mutate alike. Yet, Upani failed in his attempt to restore the political balance of power, which

¹³⁴ See e.g. NAN NAO 19, annual and monthly reports 1932–36, Hahn, annual report 1936, 16.1.1937 and NAN NAO 20, annual and monthly reports, 1937–42, Hahn, monthly report February and March 1938, 30.3.1938. For a discussion of the co-existence of customary and metropolitan law under colonialism see Roberts (2005), pp. 18–19.

¹³⁵ Roberts has referred to the significance of written knowledge for governmentality, see Roberts (2005), p. 25.

¹³⁶ NAN NAO 28, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, 24/1/1, Sgt. Cogill to Hahn, 'Confidential. Re: Disappearance. Petrus Kakuyu', 5.2.1934. The spelling is from the original.

¹³⁷ See for a discussion of the significance of knowledge in the exercise of colonial power Lalu (2000), pp. 54ff.

had predated Mutate's rule in Kaoko Otavi. Hahn continued to consider him as an unreliable candidate for future administration.¹³⁸

5.2. Marginalizing female agency

Legal prosecution of serious crimes, i.e. murder and poaching in colonial Kaoko in the early decades of South African rule exclusively affected men, and never women.¹³⁹ As shown earlier, if women engaged with or were drawn into the legal sphere, it was for other reasons, such as property issues, adultery and questions of residence.¹⁴⁰ Their roles were relational and linked to the sphere of the private, the family and the household. Hence they appeared as – guilty or innocent – widows, wives and mothers raising accusations, defending property and claiming rights.¹⁴¹ It was no different in the elephant and murder cases, where men were conceived of as the actors, and therefore threatened with prosecution, while women were confined to their role as witnesses. Two general problems of interpretation emerge with respect to women's agency: firstly, women constituted a much smaller group than the men involved and, secondly, female possibilities for speech and action were limited and were constrained by the gendered conception of the political and legal spheres.¹⁴² The roles and actions of the women involved become therefore even more elusive than those of the men. The statements attributed to them are short and suggest narrative incompetence and social and political marginality, if not irrelevance.¹⁴³ The questioning of a woman called Karinana illustrates this:

Native Woman Karinana X examined by Mr. Hahn states://I saw the elephant at the water. It was the same elephant that was subsequently killed. Opani and three other

¹³⁸ In fact Upani would be no candidate for the headmen council, which would be introduced in Kaoko in the late 1930s/early 1940s, shortly after the removal of Mutate and Tom. From the mid 1940s onwards Upani was continuously involved in conflicts with the administration.

¹³⁹ There is an "empirical gap" here (Silvester et al (1998), pp. 13–14). The absence of women charged for offences considered to be serious mirrors the complexities of criminal classification in colonial Kaoko and a reluctance to consider violent acts by women in terms of murder or manslaughter. McKittrick discusses the only case of a woman from Owambo tried in a colonial court for murder between 1915 and 1955, although she was seemingly not the only accused murderess, see McKittrick (1999), p. 274.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. the case of a woman called Onderangandja against her husband filed under NAN NAO 26, miscellaneous 1916–46, 29.9.1929, or in 1935 a case of a woman called Teresa, again in a conflict with the husband over stock, mistreatment and residence, filed under NAN NAO 28, Kaokoveld general.

¹⁴¹ Marcia Wright made a similar point for legal procedures in colonial Zambia at a magistrate's court, where "women usually, but not always, figured as complainants in civil cases and as victims in criminal cases", see Wright (1982), p. 43.

¹⁴² For a similar argument see Hayes (1998a), p. 117.

¹⁴³ This is most evidently expressed in the fact that women were exclusively identified by their first names.

natives Tshikundu, Katutenge and Kamburupuru chased it. They pursued it with assegais. Opani was here on a visit. His home is at Omuhiba. Thomas was away at Ombombo when I first saw the elephant at the water. This is some time ago. I do not know how many months. I do not know what happened to the bones of the elephant. I heard that it was killed close to Kaoko-Otavi. I did not see that it was wounded. I saw it standing at the drinking place but I could not see whether it was wounded or not. Petrus is the man who came to Kambonde's kraal to ask for the tusks. He is Josephina's husband. I understood that he wished to hide them. Later I assisted him to hide them. Juliana is the one who suggested that the tusks must be hidden. She lives next door to Thomas. Thomas was away at Tshimhaka at the time. I do not know what he was doing there. Kambonde, Thomas' brother was away with him. I have not heard that Thomas is accused of having shot the elephant. I do not know whether Opani is responsible for its death. He told me that he had driven it away from the water and that he had assegais with which he had stabbed it. I do not know who killed it. (...) I have spoken the truth./ Native Woman Karinana// Her Mark// Read over and interpreted and assented to before me this date at Kaoko-Otavi 3/9/30// (Sgd) C. Hugo Hahn//O/C, Native Affairs, Ovamboland.¹⁴⁴

The women chose different dispute practices.¹⁴⁵ According to the statements, they hid the tusks and thereby sought to prevent prosecution. The management of game was apparently not an issue they would address in terms of transgressions of game legislation. None of the women questioned on the elephant shooting accused someone else of being the poacher. Lack of knowledge or information, hearsay and rumour, which framed the account of Karinana, became an active strategy in facing the investigation, not only for women. Covering or eliminating the traces of a crime was seemingly a further option. While Hahn considered the hiding of the tusks an act of subversion, it mirrored the spaces and options available to women in a situation of threatening prosecution. The fact that African women and female social spaces were less accessible to male colonial personnel than African men and their social world,¹⁴⁶ enabled them to play a part in the management of valuables and objects of contraband. The administration's perception of game management in particular and resource management in general as predominantly male spheres prevented a contextual reading of the reasons for the women's active involvement.¹⁴⁷ Hahn and his policemen did not

¹⁴⁴ NAN NAO 28, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, 24/1/1 – statement of Karinana, Kaoko Otavi, 3.9.1930.

¹⁴⁵ On alternative means of resolving disputes in another African colonial context see Dickerman (1984). On the deterioration of conflict management for women under colonialism see Krüger & Henrichsen (1998), p. 167.

¹⁴⁶ NAN NAO 28, Kaokoveld General, Vol. 2, 24/1/1. Sgt. Cogill confirmed the difficulties of approaching women, Cogill to Hahn, 5.2.1934.

¹⁴⁷ Ginzburg discusses the selective biases in considering evidence in criminal contexts both for 16th century Inquisition trials and 20th century criminal cases. Ginzburg (1991).

follow this trace, nor were Karinana and other women, mentioned in the above statement and questioned alike, prosecuted.

Nevertheless, the pressure on women grew when Kakuyu was seemingly killed. While the group of women interrogated remained small,¹⁴⁸ their questioning became more intense. Their accounts continued to undermine Hahn's search for evidence, as the narrative was framed less around the question of who had killed Kakuyu and how, than around wider concerns about violent acts. Domestic violence, sexual harassment and male tutelage are issues that figured in the statements attributed to women.¹⁴⁹ In the inquiry, women particularly had been faced with various forms of violence, performed both by the men involved as perpetrators as well as by the colonial personnel.¹⁵⁰ These manifold experiences of increasing threats to individual and social security might be the context of the women's growing engagement with the cases, i.e. with the law as a powerful colonial institution in order to seek an outcome consistent with their sense of wrong.¹⁵¹ Josefine Mavere addressed these issues unequivocally in her account:

Accused No. 1 [Thomas Mutate] took an ox from Petrus' herd, while all his other animals were taken by Oorlog. After Petrus had disappeared, accused No. 1 asked me to sleep with him but I refused. (...) Petrus and I have been living together for a long time. I knew him very well. Years ago he had an infected wound but he was treated in a hospital and recovered. After that he was never sick again. Petrus was a good man, for me and for my father. We lived together very well. He never complained about a weak heart. He had no grey hair. His head was still black. He wasn't old. I have never seen him treating anybody in a bad way.¹⁵²

The case documents' focus on interactions considered to be relevant judicially deprived women's agency of its meaning. Above all they embodied the colonial state's ignorance when it came to female action and attitudes. Indeed, the causes which drew the women into the investigation were diverse and multiple and were decisively linked to the implications of colonialism and the changes of political power and social control.

¹⁴⁸ By the time the murder was investigated three women, among them Kakuyu's wife, were questioned repeatedly.

¹⁴⁹ For a comparison with colonial Owambo see McKittrick (1999).

¹⁵⁰ I have already mentioned allegations against du Buisson beating people. Hahn is said to have beaten and tortured women who refused to make statements about the cases. As a particularly brutal instance interviewees recalled the native commissioner forcing women to stand in the sun and have their skin burnt until they would agree to testify. Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette, 9.1.2002.

¹⁵¹ For the same argument in a different context see Roberts (1990); Roberts & Mann (1991), p. 31; Roberts (2005), p. 24.

¹⁵² NAN LOU, 1/2/1, Preparatory Examination Chief Oorlog and headman Thomas Mutate (case against), No. 23, statement of Josefine Mavere, at the circuit court of Otjiwarongo, given in Otjiherero, translated into Afrikaans, 7.1.1935 (my translation).

The first two decades of South African rule in Kaoko had led to shifts in the constitution of status and power of men such as Tom and Mutate. On the one hand, these men had successfully reframed the sources of power and had negotiated their roles within the colonial administration.¹⁵³ They had benefited from a process through which power and wealth were increasingly concentrated on a limited number of male leaders as long as they remained on friendly terms with the colonial state. Not unexpectedly, opposition grew, particularly from those who had been deprived and excluded, such as Upani Hiamauva.¹⁵⁴ Women's experiences of the centralization of power and the accumulation of wealth reflected the deterioration of social security and the gender imbalances caused by the colonial transformation.¹⁵⁵ In this context, colonial law could prove an additional field of social action and debate, enabling women, if not to influence the aims and outcomes of a trial, then at least to raise concerns about power, violence, justice and social order.¹⁵⁶

5.3. Gender & colonial law

The shape of the narrative in this chapter has been following two interdependent and mutually constitutive lines of argument. On the one hand, my reflections have again concerned the nature of colonial archival material on north-western Namibia. The main sources discussed have been the recorded statements, which emerged as part of a criminal narrative underpinning colonial efforts to establish and sustain administrative rule and order. The context of the legal prosecution and the strong influence colonial officers had on formulating the statements no doubt left its imprint on these representations. The resulting distortion entails methodological problems with regard to authorship and agency, as it makes the attribution of a particular statement to an individual man or woman in terms of speech and action problematic. The entanglement of official, i.e. colonial, and African authorship in written accounts attributed to representatives of the colonial state has been addressed on various occasions.¹⁵⁷ In the elephant and murder case, even though or precisely because

¹⁵³ See Part II.

¹⁵⁴ On conflict resulting from colonial intervention and shifts in the construction of male status and power see McKittrick (1998), pp. 248–249.

¹⁵⁵ See e.g. Wallace, M. (2002), *Health, Power and Politics in Windhoek, Namibia, 1915–45*. Basel; Moore & Vaughan (1994), particularly chapter 3. Female interviewees stressed problems resulting precisely from the emergence of powerful men such as Tom and Mutate, interview with Mariro Koviti Tjihuhura, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002, with Kainaa Menjengua Tjihero, Kaoko Otavi, 8.1.2002, and with Emily Kazombaruru Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002.

¹⁵⁶ See Roberts (2005), p. 16. On the significance of colonial law for women for the sanctioning of violence see Engle Merry, S. (1982), The articulation of legal spheres. In Hay & Wright, p. 87.

¹⁵⁷ See e.g. the introduction to White et al (2001); Moore & Vaughan (1994), p. xiii; Comaroff, J. & Comaroff, J. (1997), *Of Revelation and Revolution. The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Chicago and London.

the legal narrative claimed to provide evidence for “who had done (and said) what” – to rephrase Ginzburg – the reconstruction of the past – both in judicial and in historical terms – generated inconsistent knowledge.

One way to blur the constraints of the legal narrative and the logic of the prosecution has been a concern with gender and with the ways in which the colonial discourse conceived female agency as marginal and inconsequential.¹⁵⁸ What makes the elephant and murder cases so interesting was that, contrary to the prevailing policy of generalisation and anonymisation of people in the colony’s reserves, the criminal investigation made it – at least in theory – a condition *sine qua non* of identifying individual actors and reconstructing their motifs, aims and strategies.¹⁵⁹ Yet, the colonial stand remained ambiguous, and the case of Mutate and Tom is exemplary for colonial inconsistencies in handling and applying the law.¹⁶⁰ The contradictions were rooted in the administration’s classification of Africans and African agency, which perceived some of the colonized as capable of independent action, whilst relegating many to the status of objects of colonial rule.¹⁶¹ Though Mutate and Tom were sent to prison, the period they eventually spent there was rather short. Apparently, the fact that the victim, Kakuyu, was an African – and not a European – significantly attenuated the gravity of the offence. What has been of greater interest here, nevertheless, was that Mutate and Tom were prosecuted as representatives of a group rather than as individual subjects. While this entailed the inevitability of a legal conviction, it concurrently transformed the verdict into a representative disciplinary sanction.

The events that Mutate and Tom were made responsible for was linked to the gendered narrative presupposing male speech and action to be the determining factors in the realm of politics and law. The elephant and murder cases indeed read as re-inscriptions and reinforcements of male claims to those domains in society considered to be significant, in particular for the region’s elite. Women were reduced to a residual and, if at all, the roles assigned to them – on the margins of society – corresponded to the terms of the colonial order. Nevertheless, colonial law and the ways it was handled provided women in Kaoko with an alternative sphere of conflict resolution, particularly when it was the political leadership being challenged and local strategies such as those prescribed by “customary law” seemed less acceptable. Yet, engaging with the colonial state entailed risks and, eventually, the elephant and murder cases took their toll. While Tom passed away soon after his imprisonment on his way back to the north,¹⁶² Mutate managed to return to Kaoko against all odds, yet was

¹⁵⁸ Lalu (2000), pp. 50–51.

¹⁵⁹ See Roberts (2005), p. 30.

¹⁶⁰ See Roberts & Mann (1991), p. 36.

¹⁶¹ Lalu (2000), p. 53.

¹⁶² As Tom died in Uukwaluudhi, in then Ovamboland, he was buried there. His remains have been

never reconsidered for a headman post.¹⁶³ Instead, a headman council was introduced in Kaoko after 1939 – a shift in administration, which had been prepared by Hahn since long before Tom's and Mutate's conviction.

taken to Kaoko only in 1985, see Stals & Otto-Reiner (1999), pp. 72–73.

¹⁶³ Mutate passed away in August 1956, see NAN BOP 8, District administration. Annual reports 1955–1961, 1/15/61, officer in charge Opuwo to chief native commissioner, 19.1.1957.

Part V

Gender & the Technologies of Empire

1. The inoculation campaign against lungsickness in Kaoko in 1938

1.1. The narrative of disease eradication

In November 1936, the alarming news of recorded cases of lungsickness in the Okavango area reached the authorities in Windhoek.¹ Infected cattle had been identified by the regional officer in charge of native affairs at various spots along the Okavango River. The rainy season had started and the administration thought it impractical to send a veterinary officer to the north-eastern area in order to investigate the situation. Having been assured by the regional officers that there was no risk the disease would spread eastwards towards Caprivi and the neighbouring Bechuanaland protectorate, the central government concluded the most reasonable option was to postpone a professional assessment to the dry winter months.² Yet, more than being simply a question of unfavourable weather and hence road conditions, Windhoek's reluctance to take immediate steps was rather rooted in the awareness that controlling stock movements in the north-eastern parts of the territory was an unrealistic endeavour anyway. Indeed, the veterinarian department had considered an eradication campaign in Owambo and Okavango earlier on. But supervising movements of livestock over the northern rivers and borders remained impossible and lungsickness was prevalent in southern Angola too. Hence, a campaign, if successful at all, would have been rather questionable in view of a likely reintroduction of the disease to the Namibian colony. The senior veterinary officer left no doubt which way he thought was the most sensible to follow and that it was precisely the reasonable expectation of control that made Kaoko instead of Okavango the area of probable success:

This Administration intends next year to carry out an eradication campaign in the Kaokoveld where there is a better chance of preventing reintroduction, and no doubt the experience which is gained there will be of value to show what success may be expected if Owamboland and the Okavango area were tackled later on.³

Nevertheless, contrary to the authorities' optimistic expectations, lungsickness reached the Caprivi in 1937 and inoculations were initiated in the north-east. It took the administration almost another two years before they started the campaign in Kaoko.

¹ Lungsickness, or contagious bovine pleuro-pneumonia, is a bacterial disease contracted by inhaling the nasal discharge of infected animals. See: Waller, R. (2002), 'Clean' and 'Dirty': Cattle Disease and Control Policy in Colonial Kenya, 1900–1940. *Journal of African History*, 45: 45–80, here p. 55.

² NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinary Surgeon to Chief Veterinary Officer B.P.G. Mafeking, Windhoek, 28.11.1936.

³ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinary Surgeon to Chief Veterinary Officer B.P.G. Mafeking, Windhoek, 28.11.1936.

At the forefront of the inoculation campaign were the preparations concerned with logistics in the region and, most importantly, the question of which vaccine to use. In their choice of the campaign target area the authorities in Windhoek linked up with the spatial transformation of Kaoko in the first half of the 1930s during which most people and herds had been moved out of southern Kaoko in order to create a cattle-free zone.⁴ The planned campaign against lungsickness in 1938 concerned what the authorities by then termed “northern Kaoko”, i.e. those parts of the region north of the southern cleared zone but, significantly, excluded the Sesfontein area and its surroundings. Additionally, the permeability of the Kunene River and the threat of stock diseases being introduced from Angola remained a concern. Pending reliable agreements with the Portuguese colonial authorities regarding their willingness to envisage inoculation campaigns in the southern parts of their territory, the veterinarian department in Windhoek strongly urged the administration to establish a strong cordon along the river, which would prevent the uncontrolled movement of livestock to and from the Namibian colony.⁵

In order to allow the veterinarians to begin their work in the region, native commissioner Hahn was entrusted with informing and eventually convincing Kaoko’s inhabitants to support the administration’s attempt to eradicate lungsickness in their region. Hahn immediately raised concerns about problems which might be faced in view of such a significant intervention, particularly as the Windhoek authorities expected the stock owners in Kaoko to build roads, to construct so-called “mangas” (i.e. crush pens) and to drive their herds to selected centres of inoculation. He urged the central government to ensure “proper European supervision” and to significantly increase police presence in the region.⁶ The native commissioner’s request was approved and the authorities in Windhoek made plans to recruit 15 European constables⁷ and six African constables in the region, all of whom were to be fully armed.⁸ To insure undisturbed and favourable working conditions for the two veterinarians charged with the inoculations, Zschokke and van der Merwe, Hahn was eventually requested to transfer his headquarters temporarily from Ondangwa to Kaoko.⁹

⁴ See Part III.

⁵ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinary Officer to the Secretary for SWA, Windhoek, 14.4.1938.

⁶ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinarian of-ficer to the Secretary for SWA, Windhoek, 9.4.1938, quoting native commissioner Hahn.

⁷ NAN NAO 027, Tours to Kaokoveld, 1925–46, OC Native Affairs Ondangwa, Hahn, to Bourquin, Ondangwa, 8.7.1938.

⁸ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), OC Native Affairs Ondangwa, Telegram to the Secretary for SWA, n.d. (June, 1938).

⁹ NAN NAO 027, Tours to Kaokoveld, 1925–46, OC Native Affairs Ondangwa, Hahn, to Bourquin, Ondangwa, 8.7.1938.

The main issue yet to be decided on was the question of which vaccine to use in Kaoko for the inoculation. From a veterinarian perspective, a newly developed serum in Kenya, the Kabete vaccine,¹⁰ was the most promising. But the introduction of the Kenyan vaccine to Namibia and most importantly, its transfer to the north-western region implied comparatively high costs.¹¹ The financial aspect eventually induced the authorities in charge to opt for a different strategy and to use a “field” vaccine, which was a vaccine procured within Kaoko itself. In theory this method implied the extraction of fluid from infected lungs, which would constitute the basis for the production of a serum.¹² In order to do so, the veterinarians and the officers based in the region were in the first instance required to look for potential animal donors, i.e. infected stock.¹³ Ironically, the search and identification of infected animals in Kaoko—the material legitimization and precondition for the planned inoculation campaign in the region—proved difficult. Neither Hahn nor the constables patrolling the area were able to find cases of lungsickness that would have been suitable as vaccine providers.¹⁴ Hahn attributed the unsuccessful search for infected livestock to the lack of control in Kaoko, which, particularly in the northern area, enabled the local cattle owners to hide animals, suspected of suffering from the disease. Relying on information from one of the African constables in the region the commissioner noted in a telegram that

Ovatjimba natives lately [have] been concealing outbreaks, he [the constable] also states Angola natives fraternising with our own [to an] increasing degree and that soon [when the] Kunene which [is] now in flood becomes normal there will be greater danger [of] stock being brought over to our side.¹⁵

The situation remained unchanged until August 1938, when the inoculation campaign was about to start;¹⁶ the colonial officers and the police were not able to locate infected animals in any herd they checked in the entire region. But, in contrast to the commissioner’s suspicion that stock owners were sabotaging the planned inoculation, the non-appearance of cases of lungsickness instead reflected the pastoralists’ strategy of countering disease and

¹⁰ Miescher (2009), p. 224, and Schneider, H.P. (1994), *Animal Health and Veterinary Medicine in Namibia*. Windhoek, p. 132.

¹¹ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Secretary for SWA, wireless message to NC Ovamboland, 4.5.1938.

¹² Based on the so-called Willem’sche method, see Miescher (2009), p. 225.

¹³ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinarian Officer to the Secretary for SWA, Windhoek, 9.4.1938.

¹⁴ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinarian Officer to the Secretary for SWA, 12.4.1938.

¹⁵ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinarian Officer to the Secretary for SWA, 12.4.1938, quoting the telegram by Hahn.

¹⁶ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Major du Preez, message, 10.8.1938.

preventing its spread.¹⁷ However named, in view of their incapability to produce field vaccine in Kaoko, the veterinarians decided to use vaccine produced in the Okavango region, where the inoculation had just been completed¹⁸ – and they did so with the full awareness and knowledge of the potential risks carried by the use of extraneous serum.¹⁹

Hahn's concern with the Kaoko inhabitants' reaction to and handling of the planned inoculation of their herds wasn't entirely unfounded and from its first announcement the campaign had caused reluctance and, at times, elicited an openly negative response among the pastoralists. As we shall see, various reasons led to delays and to hostilities towards the veterinarians and their intention of eradicating lungsickness in the region for good. These were partly rooted in conflicting perceptions, understandings and ways of countering livestock disease. From the perspective of pastoralists living in Kaoko, the veterinarian endeavour was part and parcel of an intervention by the colonial state, the terms and implications of which remained unclear.

1.2. Inoculation, the pastoral economy and the colonial state

Pastoralism has figured prominently in the ethnography and historiography of Africa, and particularly of eastern and southern Africa.²⁰ But while stock disease and its management affected almost every aspect of pastoral economies and societies on a daily basis, it has received surprisingly little attention in historical work. In those areas where it enjoyed centre stage, paradigmatic assumptions have determined the analysis of disease and its socio-economic repercussions.²¹ Generally, the outbreak of animal diseases and the measures and interventions it triggered by various agents has been addressed in terms of the marginaliza-

¹⁷ See chapter 3.1. below.

¹⁸ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Secretary for SWA to Dr. F. Paes, Consul for Portugal, Windhoek, 3.8.1938.

¹⁹ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinarian Officer to the Secretary for SWA, Windhoek, 19.7.1938. Later on, during the inoculation campaign, the veterinarians ran out of vaccine and had to introduce further supplies from Owambo. See NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), G.V.O Zschokke & G.V.O. van der Merwe, Joint Report on Kaoko-Veld-Lungsickness-Campaign, 1938, p. 3.

²⁰ For an historiographical overview see Hodgson, D.L. (2000), *Rethinking Pastoralism in Africa: gender, culture & myth of the patriarchal pastoralist*. Oxford, and Galatay, J.G. & Bonte, P. (1991), *Herders, warriors, and traders: pastoralism in Africa*. Boulder. On the ethnography on pastoralism, which has been determined by East African examples, see Bollig, M. (2000), 'Production and Exchange among the Himba of Northwestern Namibia', in: Bollig & Gewald, p. 271.

²¹ Waller (2004), p. 47. As we have seen in Part I, the rinderpest pandemic ravaging the entire subcontinent at the end of the 19th century has been widely considered as a turning point in the history of various societies throughout southern Africa, including Namibia. For recent research in South Africa see Gilfoyle, D. (2003), 'Veterinary Research & the African Rinderpest Epizootic: the Cape Colony 1896–98', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29 (1): 133–154.

tion of pastoral economies by the colonial state and within colonial societies in the making.²² In his analysis of disease management and control in colonial Kenya in the first half of the 20th century, Richard Waller has argued for a more nuanced perspective and has explored how the control of animal diseases reflects and focuses many of the assumptions, tensions and contradictions latent in the colonial state.²³ In their coming to terms with the problem of disease, the colonial authorities, the veterinarians, the settlers and African livestock owners merged into a situation where they had to negotiate knowledge and power over people and animals and often in this process the new, uncertain authority of the colonial state had to compete with the certainties of established African pastoral practices.

In terms of gender relations and the way these have been affected and transformed by significant state interventions, such as the inoculation campaign in Kaoko in the late 1930s, another historiographical problem arises, as Dorothy Hodgson has rightly pointed out.²⁴ Despite recognizing how complicated it is to determine the “status” of East African pastoralist women, the author argues, “pastoralist gender relations seem to exist outside of history and be immune to change”.²⁵ Hodgson’s work raises a number of questions, which are relevant for the analysis of our case study, as they hint at the correlation between the constitution of the colonial state and the constitution of a patriarchal material and ideological understanding of pastoral societies. Indeed, as the material on colonial Kenya shows, the solidification of male control over cattle under colonialism was *inter alia* a result of the fact that state interventions aimed at transforming livestock husbandry by exclusively targeting men, whether as political leaders or as stock owners.²⁶

The extrapolating of gender relations from history applies to most scholarly work on pastoral economies and societies in Namibia,²⁷ and Michael Bollig’s work on the pastoral society in north-western Namibia unfortunately reproduces what purports to be gender-neutral but is, in fact, implicitly a male-focused bias on pastoral production, stock ownership and control over herds.²⁸

²² Waller (2004), p. 47.

²³ Waller (2004), p. 47.

²⁴ Hodgson, D.L. (1999), Pastoralism, Patriarchy and History: Changing Gender Relations among Maasai in Tanganyika, 1890–1940. *Journal of African History*, 40: 41–65.

²⁵ Hodgson (1999), p. 41.

²⁶ Hodgson (1999), pp. 43 & 57.

²⁷ An exception is Dag Henrichsen’s work on Herero societies in central Namibia in the 19th century, see Part I. The volume edited by Michael Bollig and Jan Bart Gewald, to which various authors working on Herero pastoralist societies have contributed, does enforce the male bias very strongly. Bollig, M. & Gewald, J.B. (2000), *People, Cattle, Land. Transformations of a Pastoral Society in Southwestern Africa*. Köln.

²⁸ See e.g. Bollig (2000), although the problem applies to most of his published work.

As has repeatedly been demonstrated, the narratives of the colonial archive make the reconstruction of changing social relationships difficult, and gender relations in particular remain elusive and often beyond archival representation. Nevertheless, as is the case with regard to the documentation of the inoculation campaign in Kaoko in 1938, archival documents do allow us to explore some implications the colonial state's intervention had for the social organization of the regional stock economy in terms of gender. As we shall see, the inoculation campaign involved male colonial personnel exclusively – the staff of the native affairs department, the police officers, the veterinarians, and the African constables who were recruited locally. While the colonial policy claimed to be clear and straightforward aiming at eradicating an endemic cattle disease, the role and status of these men involved the ways in which their masculinities were defined in the context of the deployment of state power and scientific expertise, which were more fractured and ambivalent than the archive might suggest at first glance. In terms of the presence of the colonial state in the north-western region, the inoculation campaign was the first intervention that aimed at a systematic and deep understanding of the regional pastoral economy. It was the first occasion on which the colonial authorities planned to identify and count each and every animal in Kaoko and associate stock with an individual owner and specific place. It goes without saying that the colonial definition of stock ownership and the geographical siting of cattle ran counter to African understandings and practices of access to livestock and its circulation within the society. Friction resulting in the course of the inoculation campaign was, as will be shown below, linked to competing knowledge about stock disease and the fight against it,²⁹ but also reflected anxieties due to the fact that the colonial state was penetrating into and trying to disrupt the most intimate domains of economic and social life.³⁰

2. A broader plan of disease management

In the early 20th century, the management and control of disease became an area of growing economic and socio-political importance, in which the colonial state and its various agents faced new challenges to their authority and legitimacy. The means used against animal diseases included legislation, the declaration and demarcation of borders, at times secured by fences or patrolled by police and eventually the enforcement of cleared or buffer zones on the African population and their livestock. As Waller has described for colonial Kenya,

²⁹ See on the aspect of competing knowledge in the context of disease management under colonialism White, L. (2000b), *Blood, Bugs, and Archives. Debates over Sleeping-Sickness in Colonial Northern Rhodesia 1931–39*. In White (2000a), pp. 208–241.

³⁰ Hodgson (1999), p. 61.

the perception and conceptualisation of diseases in colonial Namibia relied on “an idea of containment, with disease-free areas expanding outwards behind barriers of immunity, as foci of infection were systematically isolated and then destroyed”.³¹

Since the early 1920s, veterinarian policy and corresponding interventions and measures had increasingly come to the forefront of the central government’s concerns. As we saw, pressure by the settler communities in the northern districts had forced the authorities in Windhoek to lift the trade restrictions on trade with the Outjo and Grootfontein settler communities. The inclusion of parts of the northern districts into the commercial farming area had introduced a systematic control of the Police Zone boundary, which henceforth constituted, simultaneously, the border of the settler area and a veterinarian one.³² In 1928, the division of the colony between the Police Zone and the northern reserves was formally decided upon in the *Prohibited Areas Proclamation*. In terms of a veterinarian perception of the pastoral economies, the division eventually distinguished “clean”, i.e. healthy, from “dirty”, i.e. infected livestock areas. As we saw, in Kaoko the general policy of division led to the removal of several hundred people and their herds out of southern Kaoko and the creation of a stock-free zone, on which the South African colonial administration would soon model its future strategy.³³ Indeed, the chronologies of veterinarian policy and intervention reached a new turning point when in 1931 cases of Foot and Mouth disease were recorded in Southern Africa and reached British Bechuanaland. By 1934 the disease had come ominously close to the commercial farming area in Namibia.³⁴ The veterinarian department soon identified the problematic sites along the border to Bechuanaland, through which Foot and Mouth disease threatened to enter the territory. On the one hand the area along the Chobe River in the eastern Caprivi was endangered;³⁵ on the other hand, the area around Gobabis, including the Epukiro and Aminuis reserves, were considered to be potential sites of disease. Very much in line with previous ways of countering the spread of disease, the South African authorities decided to establish a police cordon and additionally declared a 30km-wide stock-free zone along the eastern border. In the Caprivi, regular and stringent police patrols along the river began to seal off the region against an eventual outbreak.³⁶ All livestock found within the cattle-free zone were to be shot immediately, such as was the case for example in the Aminuis reserve, where colonial officers shot 40 head of cattle

³¹ Waller (2004), p. 48.

³² Miescher (2009), p. 239, see Part III.

³³ Miescher (2009), p. 221.

³⁴ Miescher (2009), p. 208.

³⁵ Schneider (1994), p. 51.

³⁶ Schneider (1994), p. 51.

found inside the prohibited area.³⁷ Destruction of animals was one measure, quarantines were another and both strategies were applied in the Gobabis district, where cases of Foot and Mouth disease soon cropped up. Nevertheless, preoccupied with reversing the South African restrictions placed on Namibian imports in the aftermath of the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease, the authorities in Windhoek eventually decided to build a fence along the eastern border between latitudes 22° and 24°. The measures proved successful and, due to systematic and efficient identification of infected stock, the disease could be contained locally.³⁸

As Giorgio Miescher has shown, the attempt to counter Foot and Mouth disease in the early 1930s was a pioneering undertaking in the realm of veterinarian policy in the Namibian colony.³⁹ The control of the disease had been successful and did not require cumbersome cattle inoculations. While the protection of the Police Zone had been partly undermined by the introduction of Foot and Mouth disease from British Bechuanaland, in the north the Police Zone boundary had proved successful and no cases of infection were recorded there. But the question of how to best manage disease in the northern parts of the territory remained an issue and, as we shall see, the veterinarian department gradually began to change its policy and focus.

2.1. Expansion to the northern areas

The interventions by the veterinary department in the northern areas in the late 1930s have to be read as part of an expansion by the colonial state, which had established and consolidated itself in the central parts of the colony,⁴⁰ but remained fragile and fractured in the north. Indeed, from the very beginning, Hahn had been fully aware of this situation and he had linked the realization of inoculation campaigns to the question of subjection and control.⁴¹ From a veterinarian perspective, policies gradually shifted towards an understanding of disease management and control, which increasingly opted for transregional perspectives and strategies encompassing the narrow borders of reserves. Indeed, the veterinarian staff acknowledged that the geographies of disease hardly corresponded to those of the colonial territories.⁴² At the same time, the veterinarians hesitantly distanced themselves

³⁷ Miescher (2009), pp. 208ff.

³⁸ Nevertheless, South Africa lifted its restrictions on imported goods from Namibia only in September 1935. See Miescher (2009), pp. 206ff. Miescher discusses the measures taken in the east against Foot and Mouth disease in detail, particularly the erection of a fence along parts of the eastern border in 1934.

³⁹ Miescher (2009), p. 217.

⁴⁰ See Silvester et al (1998), p. 25.

⁴¹ We'll come back to this aspect in chapter 5.1.

⁴² The problem was indeed mainly the question of how to relate geographies of disease to the logic

from the colonial standpoint that had opted for the northern pastoral economies to be left to their own devices, provided they wouldn't affect (let alone rival) the settler economy inside the Police Zone, although these concerns remained central. As a result, reflections on more systematic veterinarian intervention in the northern areas gained impetus. Hence, when cases of lungsickness were recorded in the Okavango region in the mid-1930s, the authorities envisaged both inoculation campaigns in all the northern reserves (Kaoko, Owambo, Okavango and Caprivi) as well as cooperation with the Portuguese administration in southern Angola.

While the inoculation against lungsickness in 1930 in southern Kaoko by veterinary Schmid had followed the reactive pattern of an *ad hoc* intervention as a response to the unexpected outbreak and threats posed by a specific livestock disease,⁴³ the strategies of the late 1930s were different. The shift in approach was first based on corresponding legislation, which saw an amendment of the definition of the cattle-free zone in southern Kaoko in 1935. *Government Notice 37 of 1935* enlarged the zone defined in 1930 towards the north and the west and closed it for any stock.⁴⁴ Later that year, the stock-free zone was extended to the east and eventually included all areas beyond the Police Zone lying inside the Grootfontein district. As a result, the entire area north of the Police Zone boundary was legislated as a stock-free zone, except for those parts that fell inside the reserves.⁴⁵ By doing so, the colonial authorities had finally reached a legal and territorial separation of livestock outside the commercial farming area, i.e. in Kaoko, Owambo, Okavango and Caprivi, and herds inside. Under these restricted conditions, the veterinarians began to implement their inoculation plans for the northern reserves.

3. Spreading a disease – fissures and failures of the inoculation campaigns

3.1. Evaluating the lungsickness campaign of 1938

Government veterinary officers Zschokke and van der Merwe were in charge of the first systematic inoculation campaign in northern Namibia – that is, the 1938 inoculation in Kaoko. For support, they were joined by the stock inspector Hofmeyr and by sergeant du Buisson,

of colonial space. Compare Waller (2004), p. 57.

⁴³ See Part III. Waller has referred to the reactive approach in colonial Kenya, although chronologies and policies remain different from the ones in southern Africa. See Waller (2004), p. 57.

⁴⁴ Miescher (2009), p. 222, Fn 13 lists the original text of the amendment.

⁴⁵ Miescher (2009), p. 222. The author also discusses the corresponding changes taking place in the cartographic representation of colonial Namibia in the mid 1930s, leading to a clear marking of the Red Line, i.e. the police zone boundary, and the stock-free zones north of it.

the native affairs department officer stationed in the north-western region.⁴⁶ On the occasion of several meetings with native commissioner Hahn, which took place at the senior veterinary's and the secretary's offices in Windhoek, Zschokke and van der Merwe had been informed about growing reluctance shown by some inhabitants of Kaoko to have their livestock inoculated and branded. But the veterinarians kept themselves outside disputes that lay beyond their competence and remained optimistic, expecting the native affairs officers to resolve problems on the ground.

The team reached northern Kaoko in mid-July 1938 and to the veterinarians' disappointment the envisaged construction of roads and crushes at selected places in the region, supposed to function as inoculation centres, had been delayed due to the refusal of some so-called "recalcitrant natives". This was despite the fact that the administration had decided to send a police detachment to the region in advance in order to settle matters in favour of a successful campaign.⁴⁷ Still, the colonial staff had not been able to trace infected animals in the region, and echoing the native commissioner's argument, Zschokke and van der Merwe accused the local pastoralists of concealing possible outbreaks and hiding sick cattle. Given the lack of animals, which could be used as donors for field vaccine, the veterinarians decided to employ an extraneous serum from a virus produced in the Okavango area. Indeed, they were fully aware of the risks such a procedure implied and, as they would later stress in their report, they consequently had to act with caution:

According to instructions from the S.V.S. [senior veterinary surgeon] 6 calves were inoculated as vaccine donors and three oxen and three cows as test-animals, as it seemed not advisable to start routine-inoculation with this virus, because its reaction on the Kaokoveld-animals was uncertain and might have been too severe. // No efforts were spared to find a local strain of virus, but all information gathered was hear-say only and pointed to an outbreak in about May 1938 at Etanga, a place which was situated in the area of the recalcitrant natives and therefore at the moment not accessible. Further it had to be realized that lungsickness was not largely present in the Kaokoveld at that time.⁴⁸

Contrary to the veterinarians' knowledge and expectations, the animals intended to serve as vaccine donors did not develop the symptoms expected and were killed after two weeks of waiting in vain. Instead, it was decided to use the limited Kavango vaccine and, as soon

⁴⁶ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), G.V.O. Zschokke & G.V.O. van der Merwe, Joint Report Kako-Veld-Lungsickness-Campaign, 24.12.1938, p. 2.

⁴⁷ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Telegram by Hahn to the Secretary for South West Africa, 25.6.1938.

⁴⁸ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), G.V.O. Zschokke & G.V.O. van der Merwe, Joint Report Kako-Veld-Lungsickness-Campaign, 24.12.1938, pp. 2–3.

as conditions would allow, to import virus from neighbouring Owambo, not least because flying in Kabete vaccine was still considered to be much too expensive. While Zschokke and Hahn proceeded to the extreme northern part of Kaoko, where negotiations with pastoralists continued, van der Merwe and Hofmeyr were charged with inoculation in the central parts of the region and they began their work in mid-August 1938. As we shall see, resistance by stockowners in Kaoko could not be handled in ways the native commissioner had anticipated and eventually forced Zschokke and van der Merwe to focus the first phase of the inoculation campaign at specified inoculation centres in the area of Okorosave, Kaoko Otavi and Oruwandjai.⁴⁹

In late August, Zschokke again moved northwards accompanied by a number of policemen commissioned to guarantee an amenable working environment for the veterinarian, but were eventually mostly needed to build roads and to erect the crushes which, to the colonial staff's enduring disappointment, had still not been completed by the local pastoralists. To complicate matters further, livestock owners in the area remained reluctant to drive their herds to the inoculation centres despite the significant police presence;⁵⁰ within ten days Zschokke managed to inoculate only 920 animals. Rumours and accusations of hidden stock and orchestrated subversion increased and hardened the colonial staff's allegations that lung sickness was a particular threat in the most northern part of Kaoko and left no doubt about the urgency of both veterinarian and police intervention. Nevertheless, and in view of their inability to identify and trace animals infected with lung sickness in either central or in northern Kaoko, the veterinarians eventually had to acknowledge that besides the local inhabitants' scepticism and reluctance to have their livestock inoculated, chaotic logistics, recurrent problems with technical materials and with transport in particular ran against a professional and competent realization of the campaign. The main problem they faced in terms of an appropriate veterinarian assessment of the disease situation was that both Zschokke and van der Merwe lacked the time and personnel required to identify infected animals and therefore to diagnose the disease reliably. To their distress, they had to depend on information provided by local stockowners who knew the herds and the health conditions of every single animal. The deployment of police and the compulsory character the inoculation campaign had from its very beginning led to a situation in which exchange

⁴⁹ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lung sickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Secretary for South West Africa, Telegram to Hahn, 1.7.1938, who had suggested a start of the inoculation campaign in central Kaoko and a later intervention in northern Kaoko.

⁵⁰ By August 1938, 20 policemen were stationed in northern Kaoko, see NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lung sickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Secretary for South West Africa, Notes of a telephone conversation with Hahn, 26.7.1938 and Secretary for South West Africa, Notes on a conversation with Hahn, 1.8.1938.

of knowledge and information between the veterinarians and the pastoralists in Kaoko had become acutely disturbed.

3.1.1. Facing resistance in northern Kaoko

As we saw, the colonial narrative on early local scepticism towards the planned inoculation campaign was disparagingly termed “recalcitrant”. Compulsorily, almost obsessively, the colonial officers read and interpreted people’s responses as an expression of potential subversion—at the very least as a form of questioning colonial presence and control in the area. Hahn in particular framed things in terms of his personal integrity and success as a representative of the colonial state and did not hesitate to announce drastic measures, a rhetoric which had irritated the veterinarian department in Windhoek from the beginning.⁵¹ Obviously, the stock-owners’ criticism or scepticism made sense, not only because they witnessed a significant increase of police in their region, but because the control and supervision of their herds were at stake. Yet, the hastiness of Hahn’s and the veterinarians’ judgement claiming that people were deliberately hiding infected animals was less a reflection of a reality than an expression of the biased approach the colonial officers held. Indeed, archival information allows for the recovery of some considerations and strategies chosen by pastoralists, which were rooted in local herd and disease management rather than in an attempt to resist veterinarian intervention *per se*.

By June 1938, Hahn had been preoccupied with touring Kaoko and informing the headmen in the region about the administration’s plan to have an inoculation campaign in their area. In a telegram he sent to the secretary for the protectorate he briefly reported on local responses, stating that while the representatives of the Herero sections residing in Kaoko were keen to have their stock inoculated and urged the government to start the campaign as soon as possible, they raised concerns about the likely resistance Hahn could expect from the Ovattjimba and Ovahimba groups in the northern parts of the region.⁵² Within Hahn’s logic and narrative, the question of accepting or rejecting the planned campaign had immediately become an issue of African susceptibility to modernisation, undoubtedly amenable to the Herero population, but much more extraneous to those colonial subjects who lived in the remote areas of Kaoko and who continued to be perceived as “wild and uncivilised”.⁵³ Indeed, when the commissioner reached the uppermost northern and western parts of Kaoko,

⁵¹ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinarian Officer to the Secretary for South West Africa, Windhoek, 12.4.1938.

⁵² SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Hahn, Telegram to the Secretary for South west Africa, Outjo, n.d. (June, 1938).

⁵³ Dorothy Hodgson has described similar narratives linked to veterinarian policy and intervention in colonial Tanganyika in the mid 1920s. See Hodgson (1999), pp. 61–62.

which were by then under the leadership of headmen Karuwapa, Ueripaka and Mariha,⁵⁴ he met a population that was far from approving the colonial government's most recent plan. Initially, Hahn urged the administration to clarify the question of compensation, as he presumed that once concerns about losing animals due to the inoculation were cleared up, their reluctance to cooperate would virtually disappear.⁵⁵ His request was based on a suggestion made by the senior veterinary surgeon earlier that year, who had required the full compensation for losses of animals used for vaccine preparation and a partial replacement of losses for slightly infected stock.⁵⁶ Eventually Hahn's request was successful and found acceptance with the central government in Windhoek.⁵⁷

The three headmen mentioned above had raised their concerns about the inoculation campaign at a very early stage. But while the colonial perception of their reluctance tended to homogenize African actors and their resistance, the scattered archival information on how Karuwapa, Ueripaka and Mariha argued and acted, in view of the planned inoculation, reflects differences. In late June 1938, Hahn reported on an initial conversation he had with the northern leaders stating that, while Karuwapa agreed to have his and his people's stock inoculated, he was against the branding of animals; however, Ueripaka and Mariha refused categorically to submit to the administration's plan.⁵⁸ Considering that their residence was in immediate vicinity of the Kunene, the commissioner was well aware of the fact that, in contrast to stock owners in central Kaoko, the northern and north-western communities had the possibility of simply moving their herds over the river into southern Angola to evade the inoculation. Neither South African nor Portuguese colonial resources permitted the effective supervision of such movements. Hahn stepped things up by rephrasing his suggestion that the administration use police action and, if necessary, force in order to have people comply with the campaign.⁵⁹ Beyond issues of colonial supervision and control, the main factor requiring the eventual cooperation of Karuwapa, Ueripaka and Mariha was simply the sheer

⁵⁴ The three headmen mentioned officiated in those areas formerly ruled by Kakurukuje and Muhona Katiti. As we saw earlier on the death of Kakurukouje and Muhona Katiti in the early 1930s, and most of all Vita Tom's dismissal and eventual death in 1939, had led to the gradual instalment of a headmen council in Kaoko. See Part IV.

⁵⁵ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), NC Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for South West Africa, 15.7.1938.

⁵⁶ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Vet Surgeon to Government Vet Officer, Windhoek, 1.6.1938.

⁵⁷ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), the Administrator to the Senior Vet Officer, Windhoek, n.d.

⁵⁸ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Hahn to the Secretary for South West Africa, Telegram, 25.6.1938.

⁵⁹ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Hahn to the Secretary for South West Africa, Telegram, 28.6.1938.

number of livestock these headmen and their followers were said to own, as it comprised an estimated total of at least 12,000 head of large stock.⁶⁰ At first, the authorities in Windhoek hoped that the promise of compensating animal losses would soften the headmen's position but by late July the situation had not changed. Karuwapa had reconsidered his position and was now urging the colonial government to postpone the campaign in the northern part of Kaoko. The headman intended to wait and see the effects the inoculation would have on stock owned by the Herero communities in the region, and explained they would base an eventual decision on his appraisal of the campaign's impact.⁶¹ He furthermore explained to the native commissioner that the compulsory branding of animals gave reason to suspect the government of claiming property on stock herds. In view of the continuing argument and the incapacity to come to terms with the refusal to cooperate, the administration tightened its approach and eventually opted for the authoritarian route. Although the secretary for the protectorate claimed that "we naturally did not want bloodshed",⁶² the use of police force, if the headmen stuck to their position, became almost a necessity and the central government even considered using aeroplanes as a means of "persuasion".⁶³ The deployment and application of force furthermore resulted from persistent rumours about stock hiding and illicit movement of herds over the Kunene and that even if the authorities eventually managed to force Karuwapa, Ueripaka and Mariha into the inoculation campaign, their control over their subjects remained limited.⁶⁴

The differences in how people reacted to the planned inoculation campaign were only partly rooted in concerns about a significant intervention by the colonial state, which was, from its very beginning, accompanied by the intrusion of police forces. In contrast to the narrative framing responses in terms of the acceptability of allegedly modernising processes, archival sources every now and then refer to geographic, economic and social considerations guiding the Kaoko pastoralists' responses to the inoculation. Negotiations between livestock owners in central Kaoko, in the area around Kaoko Otavi, Okorosave and Oruwandjai developed positively in terms of the administration's plan to have stock branded and inoculated against lungsickness. Although there is no information on how the authori-

⁶⁰ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Hahn to the Secretary for South West Africa, Telegram, 28.6.1938.

⁶¹ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Hahn to the Secretary for South West Africa, Telegram, 23.7.1938.

⁶² SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Secretary for South West Africa, Notes on a telephone conversation with NC Hahn, 26.7.1938.

⁶³ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Secretary for South West Africa, Notes of a telephone conversation with NC Hahn, 26.7.1938.

⁶⁴ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinary Surgeon to the Secretary for South West Africa, Ohopuho, 8.9.1938.

ties managed to convince the inhabitants in central Kaoko to participate in the campaign, to build roads for transport, crushes for the concentration of herds to be inoculated and to support veterinarians in identifying potential infections, the relative closeness of these residential centres to the southern commercial farming area played a crucial role. Indeed, the accessibility of markets in central Namibia remained an issue and a successful inoculation campaign was no doubt linked to the expectation to be allowed to participate in formal, i.e. legal trade with stock.⁶⁵ Some of the livestock owners in the Okorosave area had already been involved in the first inoculation in southern Kaoko performed by veterinary Schmid in 1930, which had been quite successful.⁶⁶ Yet, these interests and experiences were limited to central Kaoko and could not have been part of the considerations and concerns of pastoralists further north. The management of herds and of animal diseases had skirted colonial control against all odds. The fact that the veterinarians sent to the area as well as the policemen were not in a position to locate acute cases of infected animals might be read as an indication of successful local disease management. Indeed, Zschokke and van der Merwe acknowledged in their report on the campaign of 1938 that people had informed the veterinarians that in the mid-1930s there had been a few cases of lung sickness outbreaks in northern Kaoko, but that the stock owners had managed to counter the disease by inoculating animals or slaughtering them.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the perception that the veterinary intervention was from its very beginning linked to limitations imposed on land use and mobility of herds, particularly across the Kunene River, weakened the probability of cooperation by pastoralists in northern Kaoko.⁶⁸

In terms of the campaign's social anchorage and the ability of the colonial officers to account for the social organization of pastoral production and the circulation of herds in the region, resistance to the branding of animals, which was a *sine qua non* of the campaign, is suggestive. Theoretically, the branding of stock was aimed at allowing the colonial state to mark individual animals that had been inoculated and, later on, to identify stock held back from the inoculation. In view of the inability of the colonial authorities in Kaoko to fulfil the basic requirements of administration, among them the statistical determination of numbers

⁶⁵ The archival documents from the late 1930s do not refer to this argument. Only in 1963, when new inoculations were planned in Kaoko, headmen in Kaoko Otavi referred to the administration's promise in 1938 to allow them access to the central Namibian stock markets, provided they would participate in the campaign. See NAN BAC 41 – HN 1715/4/1, NA district administration, meetings Kaokoveld, 1955–63, OC Opuwo to CNC, notes on a meeting at Opuwo (10.11.63), 29.1.1963.

⁶⁶ See Part III.

⁶⁷ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lung sickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), G.V.O. Zschokke and G.V.O. van der Merwe, Kaoko-veld-lung sickness-campaign, 24.12.1938, p. 5.

⁶⁸ On this point see Hodgson (1999), p. 61.

of people and stock in the region on which they could have based the system of taxation, branding stock also served the purpose of counting each and every animal found in the area. From the pastoralists' perspective branding their livestock was beyond any doubt associated with a claim to ownership. Indeed, to allow for a successful campaign, herds had to be unambiguously assigned to an identified stockowner and to a determined place – a system which ran against the complexities of stock ownership and circulation.⁶⁹ As a rule and pattern of most colonial interventions, the administration particularly targeted men, considering them to be the political leaders, the heads of households and the main producers and relevant owners of cattle.⁷⁰ The bias affected economic hierarchies as much as it disturbed gendered access to property in stock. In mid-August 1938, in the midst of the campaign, rumours about people subverting the headmen's claim to control over their livestock intensified.⁷¹ Several cases of stock being hidden and single households moving their herds over the Kunene were recorded.⁷²

Nevertheless and regardless of all reluctance shown by the local inhabitants, the planned inoculation campaign was imposed on the region's livestock owners. In early August 1939 Zschokke and Hofmeyr had managed to produce field vaccine from animals that had been inoculated with virus from the Okavango region, and within six days the veterinarians inoculated and branded the first group of 2475 head of cattle in the area of Kaoko Otavi. They soon ran out of vaccine causing Zschokke and van der Merwe to proceed to Owambo to collect new vaccine and continue the campaign in central Kaoko on the 18th of the same month, now attending to herds that had been driven by their owners to Oruwandjai. Unexpectedly, they encountered a herd of 600 head of cattle that had been driven towards Sesfontein in order to evade inoculation.⁷³ This only served to remind the colonial officers and the veterinarian staff afresh that the preparedness to cooperate was unstable. And as we saw above, problems grew substantially once the veterinarians extended their activity to the northern parts of Kaoko. The reluctance and, in part, open refusal by the headmen in the north and north-west to participate in the campaign eventually led to serious delays in the construction of the crushes and the concentration of herds at the designated inoculation centres,

⁶⁹ On this point see Waller (2002), pp. 52–53.

⁷⁰ Hence the archival reports list, although neither systematically nor comprehensively, male stockowners and place names to which herds were associated. On the targeting of men and their construction as exclusive stockowners see Hodgson (1999), p. 43.

⁷¹ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Hahn to the Secretary for South West Africa, Telegram, 16.8.1938.

⁷² SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinary Surgeon to the Secretary for South West Africa, Ohopuho, 8.9.1938.

⁷³ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), G.V.O. Zschokke and G.V.O. van der Merwe, Kaoko-veld-lungsickness-campaign, 24.12.1938, p. 4.

such as Otjijandjasemo and Epembe. In the end, to cushion the discomfort policemen and African constables recruited locally performed the infrastructural work, originally meant to be attended to by the local communities, and inoculation began in late August 1938. Logistics and organization were still cumbersome, however, and Zschokke and van der Merwe were forced to wait time and again for herds to be driven to the selected sites, inoculating them in several sequences and groups comprising 500 to 800 animals. The campaign was eventually brought to an end only in mid-October 1938, with the inoculation of 1615 head of stock at Otjivero.⁷⁴ Within a period of three months the veterinarians had managed to inoculate and brand 24,402 head of cattle.

After the completion of the inoculation campaign of 1938, the veterinarians addressed the question of the effects the inoculation would have on the herds in Kaoko. The cautionary tone of their assessment provides a first indication of how problematic the campaign was in terms of a professional veterinarian theory and method.

Unfortunately it was impossible to inspect and re-inspect the vaccinated cattle and the occasional reports from the various cattle owners were so summarily that no clear conception of the actual position could be formed. // In the south where apparently there has not been an outbreak of lungsickness for many years the effects of the vaccination had to be obviously severer than in the north where a large percentage of the animals have been vaccinated at one time or the other by the respective owners.⁷⁵

Against the obvious impropriety of their procedure, Zschokke and van der Merwe still claimed that they had reason to expect that eventual losses caused by the inoculation would in any case remain below average losses caused by vaccination, which according to contemporary scholarship were usually fixed around 1–3 %.⁷⁶ Yet, developments showed that the veterinarians' assessment proved dramatically wrong and, in April 1939 after having visited various places all over the region, Hahn drew a disastrous picture of the inoculation's impact on the region's herds, leaving no doubt that the disease had spread all over Kaoko and threatened vast parts of the herds.⁷⁷ The situation appeared to be most dramatic in the area of Kaoko Otavi, Okorosave and Ombathu, where almost 500 deaths out of a total of 591 infected animals in the immediate aftermath of the campaign were recorded. The colonial authorities perhaps not surprisingly expected illegal stock movements and animals

⁷⁴ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), G.V.O. Zschokke and G.V.O. van der Merwe, Kaoko-veld-lungsickness-campaign, 24.12.1938, p. 8.

⁷⁵ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), G.V.O. Zschokke and G.V.O. van der Merwe, Kaoko-veld-lungsickness-campaign, 24.12.1938, p. 11.

⁷⁶ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), G.V.O. Zschokke and G.V.O. van der Merwe, Kaoko-veld-lungsickness-campaign, 24.12.1938, p. 12.

⁷⁷ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), OC Native Affairs, Hahn, Report on Lungsickness in the Kaokoveld, 24.4.1939.

hidden during the inoculation campaign to be the most plausible source of infection. But considering the somewhat embarrassing fact that the brands put on livestock during the campaign in order to identify inoculated stock were of such bad quality that they could often not be traced, the colonial officers could not prove their suspicion.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Hahn conceded that the introduction of lungsickness to Kaoko, whether from areas north of the Kunene River, or caused by cattle that had not been inoculated, remained unlikely. To the commissioner's distress, developments strongly suggested that it was indeed the livestock's negative reaction to the vaccine imported from Okavango and Owambo that had eventually caused the alarming spread of the disease.⁷⁹ The native commissioner's urgent request to compensate at least some of the losses the stockowners had suffered as a consequence of the inoculation campaign went unheard.

The seriousness of the situation and the conclusions the administration would eventually draw from the failure of the campaign of 1938 soon began to emerge in the correspondence among the veterinary officers, whose professional reputation had come under heavy scrutiny. Accordingly, the veterinarians' priority was to explain and legitimize the negative outcome of their intervention and to alleviate the administration's concerns with reference to the complexities of the disease situation that had emerged in the region, the difficulties faced due to the high mobility of herds in Kaoko and the fragility of control mechanisms. In an extensive report government veterinarian Watt meticulously rephrased information he had been given by male stockowners in the region, which was far from allowing a systematic assessment, let alone an analysis of the reasons for dramatic advance of lungsickness in the north-western part of the territory.⁸⁰ Watt found serious fault with the ways brands had been placed on animals and was also sceptical about the comprehensiveness of the 1938 campaign. Yet eventually, and in line with Hahn's earlier anxiety, it became obvious what the main and most probable reason for the disastrous effects of the inoculation had been, namely, the arbitrariness of the extraneous vaccine used. Watt called for what he considered an essential re-inoculation of herds in Kaoko and underlined the need to use, in contrast to the first campaign, Kabete vaccine, even though he was well aware that the procedures it

⁷⁸ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Secretary for the Protectorate to the Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Windhoek, n.d. (1938).

⁷⁹ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), OC Native Affairs, Hahn, Report on Lungsickness in the Kaokoveld, 24.4.1939, pp. 8–9.

⁸⁰ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Government Veterinary Officer Watt to the Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Windhoek, 3.6.1939. E.g. the percentages of deceased animals and the percentages of infected animals among the herds Watt examined varied substantially, sometimes around 3–5 % of dead animals up to more than 10% of the cattle showing symptoms of infection (pp. 9–10)

entailed were more complicated and the costs it would generate far higher.⁸¹ The additional expenses to be expected might have been the ultimate reason why the senior veterinary surgeon drew a frightening scenario in a letter to the secretary for South West Africa:

It is evident [...] that there are several foci of active infection and that unless steps are taken to check the disease it may, as a result of uncontrolled cattle movements, soon become widespread throughout the Kaokoveld. There appears to be evidence that some of the animals subjected to the inoculation last year may have lost their immunity and this naturally aggravates the situation. But apart from the cattle losses which may result in the Kaokoveld proper, there exists a decided danger of lungsickness spreading south to those herds not done last year and even to the Zesfontein area. Should this eventuate the maintenance of a strong Police cordon, to protect the cattle industry in this Territory, will become imperative.⁸²

This time, the veterinarian request was well heard in Windhoek and the central government approved a second inoculation campaign in Kaoko to be carried out in 1939.⁸³ As we shall see, the tone of this second campaign changed dramatically for the worse. Going well beyond the protection of the stock economy inside the Police Zone, the second inoculation campaign soon proved to be pivotal for an unprecedented colonial interference in Kaoko's society and economy.

3.2. Second lungsickness inoculation campaign of 1939

The ways the veterinarian bodies coordinated and planned the second inoculation campaign made the inconsistencies of the first intervention in 1938 visible anew. Watt's report made detailed suggestions in this regard. First, the Kabete vaccine entailed specific requirements in terms of method. Three inoculations were necessary at intervals of three weeks, presupposing a campaign arranged in three cycles and the definition of areas with manageable units of cattle populations. Estimating the number of large stock at around 35,000 head, Watt then defined four sections of Kaoko in which various inoculation centres would come to be located: a northern area, with Epembe, Ehomba, Otjijandjasemo and Etengua, a central area, with Oukongo and Otjivero, a south-western area, with Okorosave, Kaoko Otavi, Oru-wandjai and Ongongo, and a south-eastern area, with Otjingeresse, Ohakarungu, Ombombo and Otjitundua as centres for the concentration of herds to be inoculated.⁸⁴ In view of the

⁸¹ SWAA 1173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Government Veterinary Officer Watt to the Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Windhoek, 3.6.1939, p. 21.

⁸² SWAA 1173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinary Surgeon to the Secretary for South West Africa, Windhoek, 23.6.1939.

⁸³ In its legal form in *Government Notice of 15.7.1939*, re second inoculation campaign in Kaoko.

⁸⁴ SWAA 1173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Government Veterinary Officer Watt to the Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Windhoek, 3.6.1939, p. 22.

deterioration of the general disease situation in Kaoko after 1938 and the threats posed by the advance of lungsickness southwards, Watt urged the authorities to include Sesfontein in the second campaign and to send one veterinarian on a special patrol to the south-western outpost in order to inoculate the livestock found there. Watt's recommendations were fully accepted by the Windhoek authorities, including the use of Kabete vaccine, which was to be flown in from Nairobi via Windhoek to the *ad hoc* erected airfield in Ohopuho in central Kaoko, and eventually distributed by car throughout the region.⁸⁵

In view of the second inoculation campaign and, as a means of improving the workings of the colonial administration, Kaoko – i.e. the central and northern areas – had been declared a separate district. In May 1939, sergeant Barnard was appointed officer in charge of native affairs stationed in Ohopuho.⁸⁶ Immediately after taking up duties Barnard faced the first challenge to his authority as headman Ueripaka reported that a group of people had left north-western Kaoko with substantial herds of cattle, some of which the headman claimed as his property. They had probably crossed over the Kunene into Angola, he said, and they obviously did so in order to evade inoculation.⁸⁷ Later on, a special police patrol sent out to investigate matters proved that 13 households had crossed the river and that they had taken huge herds of large stock, estimated between 2000–3000 head of cattle, and all their small stock into Angola.⁸⁸ The evidence was worrying and, in view of the disastrous impact of the first campaign, the newly appointed officer in charge had some reason to fear widespread opposition against the second inoculation about to start. Yet, Barnard's strategy of handling the situation would, as we shall see, become symptomatic and characteristic for the shift in policy the colonial authorities carried out. In contrast to the preparations for the inoculation campaign in 1938, where Hahn and Zschokke had cultivated cooperation and had repeatedly met with regional leaders in order to convince them and to negotiate the terms of the veterinarian intervention, Barnard opted for an unambiguous display of power. Besides the detachment of South West African police forces stationed in Kaoko, the officer in charge of native affairs recruited 17 local men, among them some of the influential Herero men such as Thomas Mutate and Moses Ndjai, charged with patrolling the entire area and identifying "illegal" stock movements as well as with patrolling the region's north-

⁸⁵ SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld (1936–39), Senior Veterinary Surgeon to the Secretary for South West Africa, Windhoek, 23.6.1939, p. 5.

⁸⁶ NAN NAO 020, monthly and annual reports 1937–42, NC Ovamboland to the Secretary for South West Africa, Monthly report May 1939, Ondagua, 9.6.1939. We'll come back to the declaration of Kaoko as a separate district and Hahn's opposition to it in chapter 5.1.

⁸⁷ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho, Barnard, to the Secretary for South West Africa, 14.7.1939.

⁸⁸ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho, Barnard, to the Secretary for South West Africa, 19.8.1939.

ern and eastern borders.⁸⁹ Inoculation started in early August 1939 and within two weeks four veterinarians, supported by the colonial officers and the policemen, accomplished the first cycle of inoculation, which included 37,000 head of large stock from all over the region. The significant number of stock dealt with in such a short period was, as we shall see, an expression of the extent to which the second campaign was imposed by force, although Barnard euphemistically acknowledged only that here and there had conditions been rather “unfavourable”.⁹⁰ For instance, the situation along the borders was complex, although the border areas were bound by neutral zones supposedly protected against uncontrolled crossing of stock since the early 1930s. Pastoralists in south-eastern Kaoko continued to use waterholes and pastures along the southern and central section of the Kaoko-Owambo border, which posed a risk in terms of diseases spreading from the neighbouring Owambo regions to the south-western areas of Kaoko. Barnard and Watt, who eventually became the leading veterinarian in the second inoculation campaign, were commissioned to make sure that all herds concerned would either move into Owambo or otherwise be driven to Otjikuware in order to be inoculated. Negotiations with headman Langman showed that most animals had received the vaccine against lungsickness in 1930 by veterinary Schmid and that no cases of infection had been recorded ever since. Nevertheless, people were required to leave the border area for good and by enforcing this Barnard hoped the neutral zone separating the two districts would at last become a reality.⁹¹ But the main site of friction was the Kunene River and uncontrolled movements of cattle to and from the Angolan territory, where the Portuguese authorities seemingly continued to lack any interest whatsoever in engaging with transregional disease management. From July 1939 onwards, Barnard had put some energy into clearing the neutral zone along the northern river – by removing people and herds southwards,⁹² or by repeatedly urging the headmen to accordingly instruct their subjects, and by increasing the number of African police constables stationed at the important drifts where “illicit” crossing of stock could be expected.⁹³

⁸⁹ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, List of Native Constables employed, 20.7.1939.

⁹⁰ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, 22.8.1939.

⁹¹ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho, Barnard, Notes on an Interview with Headman Langman, Herero Yehokombie and others, 19.7.1939.

⁹² NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho, Barnard, to the Secretary for South West Africa, 20.7.1939.

⁹³ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, 22.8.1939.

Opposition against and problems during the campaign continued. Nevertheless, the veterinarians managed to complete the second and third cycle of the inoculation throughout August and September 1939. Among the contestants, headman Karuwapa, who had been very outspoken during the first campaign in 1938, again figures prominently in the archival records. In a statement recorded at Ondangwa in mid-November 1939, the headman made serious accusations against the colonial officers in Kaoko and left no doubt about the violence involved in the inoculation campaign imposed in his area.⁹⁴ The gravity of the situation was first expressed in Karuwapa's strategic choice to file his action at Ondangwa, i.e. at native commissioner Hahn's office, thereby avoiding a direct confrontation with Barnard. Initially, the headman reported several cases of physical violence by policemen against his people, including his son and wife, while they had been busy collecting the herds and driving them into the crushes for inoculation. The second issue addressed in the statement concerned the question of compensation for cattle losses and the colonial authorities continued to act incoherently in this regard. Karuwapa's list of animals that had been shot in his area during the campaign left a clear impression about the arbitrariness of stock destruction and the inability or unpreparedness of the colonial staff to account for the shooting of livestock. The pastoralists' claims for compensation went unheard and unsatisfied. Finally, Karuwapa closed his statement with a general critique of the ways the colonial government was imposing its rule and authority in Kaoko:

We are sorry that we are treated in this way. It seems now that the Government just wants to sit on top of us⁹⁵

Reactions to the increasing criticism such as that levelled by Karuwapa were harsh, relentless and at times rather arrogant, whether coming from the colonial officers, the central government or the veterinarians. In a letter to the administrator for instance the chief native commissioner emphatically refused any kind of compensation for losses suffered by Karuwapa and his followers, stating that people had to blame themselves for their inability to control their herds and to follow the directions received by the veterinarian staff. Besides that, the native affairs department in Windhoek very much wanted to avoid setting a precedent that would legitimize a possible wave of claims by livestock owners all over the northern territories.⁹⁶ After the campaign had been completed, the veterinarians commented on

⁹⁴ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Statement by Karuwapa, headman of the Owahimbas, Kaokoveld, taken by C.T. Bourquin, Ondangwa, 17.11.1939.

⁹⁵ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Statement by Karuwapa, headman of the Owahimbas, Kaokoveld, taken by C.T. Bourquin, Ondangwa, 17.11.1939, p. 3.

⁹⁶ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Chief Native Commissioner to the Administrator, Windhoek, 29.11.1939. Also NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lung-

how relations between the pastoralists and themselves had developed in the course of the campaign adding an explanation of the delays and problems encountered. Their final reports are revealing in this regard and provide a sense of the significance the inoculations of 1938 and 1939 had for the veterinary department and profession in the colony. Most official records by the veterinarians portray these campaigns as successful, notwithstanding the failure of the first inoculation in 1938, which could hardly have been described in this way. Yet, the most uncomfortable tension within all the veterinarian reports was, as we shall see, the handling of violence, i.e. the forceful imposition of inoculation and disciplinary sanctions on the region's livestock herds and herders. By late 1939, the general assessment of the campaigns against lungsickness in Kaoko included, albeit often unassertively, the admission that there existed a serious state of affairs as a result of using field virus in the 1938 inoculation.

Unfortunately it must be accepted that to a very large extent the spread of lungsickness in the Kaokoveld must be attributed to the use of field virus during the 1938 campaign and as such it was the duty of the Administration to protect and save as many of the native stock as possible.⁹⁷

The negative impact of their first intervention and, as we saw earlier on, the threat of the disease spreading to the Police Zone increased the geographical outreach of the 1939 campaign significantly and eventually led to the inclusion of the southern parts of Kaoko, such as the areas around Sesfontein and Otjikuvare, which had not been attended to previously.⁹⁸ Indeed, long-term effects of the mistakes during the 1938 campaign continued to plague the veterinarian endeavour. The professional detection of infected animals and identifying the causes, according to the colonial authorities' assessment of the situation, remained problematic. Watt and his colleagues continuously faced cases of infection that were either the result of the first inoculation with field virus or, as was increasingly the case by the third inoculation cycle in autumn 1939, to be explained as a consequence of the latest vaccination with the Kabete serum. The veterinarians handled both events by immediately destroying the animals concerned, whilst conceding, that, if at all, the method available only allowed for the detection of acute or chronic open cases of lungsickness and was unable to discern less

sickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Secretary for South West Africa to the Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Windhoek, 1.12.1939.

⁹⁷ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Senior Veterinary Surgeon to the Secretary for South West Africa, Windhoek, 7.12.1939, p. 7.

⁹⁸ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Government Veterinary Officer Watt, Report on the 1939 Contagious Pleuro Pneumonia Inoculation Campaign, n.d. (ca. September 1939), p. 1.

developed forms of the disease.⁹⁹ Regardless of the remaining arbitrariness in the identification of infected stock, as well as in the qualification of infection sources and the dynamics of disease spread, the veterinarians did not retract their view that the administration should have handled and granted compensation for animal losses as conservatively as possible.¹⁰⁰ Their reluctance might have been a result of the problems the veterinarians had faced in getting a sense of the comprehensiveness of the three inoculation cycles, considering that the treatment of each and every single head of large stock was the *sine qua non* of a campaign expected to be successful in terms of disease eradication. The number of total stock inoculated during the first, second and third cycle varied and gave way to justified doubts about livestock owners' unreserved cooperation and participation in the campaign.¹⁰¹ But the most obvious evidence for the incompleteness of the 1939 inoculation was the condition of the brand marks on the regional stock. The identification of brands used in 1938 became an almost ridiculous endeavour – either the cattle lacked any sign of branding, and had evidently been kept away from the campaign, or the bad quality of the branding irons used made a clear identification impossible; last but not least, cases of alleged faked brands eventually made the whole issue highly questionable.¹⁰² This general difficulty took a dramatic form in northern Kaoko, where the veterinarian officer charged with the vaccination in 1939 worriedly noted that almost 50% of the stock didn't bear any sign of branding whatsoever.¹⁰³ In spite of these obvious problems in controlling the integration of the cattle herds in the inoculation process, the veterinarians remained ambivalent towards the colonial authorities' handling of the adversities encountered. While they openly lamented the difficulties encountered around erecting crushes, the concentration of herds at the inoculation centres and a campaign course, which generally failed to satisfy their methodological and professional requirements, they nevertheless repeatedly expressed concerns about the

⁹⁹ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Government Veterinary Officer Watt, Report on the 1939 Contagious Pleuro Pneumonia Inoculation Campaign, n.d. (ca. September 1939), p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Senior Veterinary Surgeon to the Secretary for South West Africa, Windhoek, 7.12.1939, p. 6. The veterinary claimed that only for 232 animals shot the administration should pay some kind of compensation. No archival document gives evidence for the payment being eventually effected.

¹⁰¹ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Government Veterinary Officer Watt, Report on the 1939 Contagious Pleuro Pneumonia Inoculation Campaign, n.d. (ca. September 1939), p. 7.

¹⁰² NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Office of the Government Veterinary Officer to the Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Keetmanshoop, 23.9.1939, pp. 3–4.

¹⁰³ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Government Veterinary Officer Watt, Report on the 1939 Contagious Pleuro Pneumonia Inoculation Campaign, n.d. (ca. September 1939), p. 7, though Watt thought the 50% estimation done by his colleague de Wet to be exaggerated.

compulsory and, at times, violent submission of livestock owners to the campaign. Watt noted in his report that most of his colleagues had expressed the wish to conduct any future inoculation without police presence and intervention.¹⁰⁴ In contrast to the lower ranks, the senior veterinary surgeon in line with and most likely motivated by his administrative role and responsibility downplayed the criticism. While he conceded that “assistance [by stock owners] was not always freely rendered”, he nevertheless explained the delays caused during the campaign with the backwardness of particularly northern Kaoko’s pastoralists and the weakness of African leadership and control:

The Northern area would appear to be inhabited mostly by an inferior type of native of low intellect which somewhat explains the difficulties experienced by Government Veterinary Officer de Wet (...) the headmen are weak and unable to exercise proper control over their subordinates¹⁰⁵

The veterinarian’s judgement echoed the general narrative of the colonial state, which was particularly severe with regard to the communities living in the northern part of Kaoko, i.e. in those areas that had continuously been difficult to control and supervise. In the end, one of the crucial issues emerging from the inoculation campaigns of the late 1930s was the question of colonial rule at the margins of the region. When charges increased against police constables who had allegedly shot stock, albeit supposedly to prevent the spread of lungsickness, Barnard eventually made a terse point in a tone typical of the colonial administration in the north-west: a stock owner in northern Kaoko named Thongaku filed a complaint that he had unlawfully lost an ox to the government. He asked for compensation. Barnard bluntly refused to consider the complainant’s reasoning and concluded instead that “the Ovahimbas have been allowed to please themselves too long and I recommend that an example should be made of Thongaku” – a threat which increasingly implied removal out of Kaoko.¹⁰⁶

If compared, the two inoculation campaigns of 1938 and of 1939 were both part of an attempt by the colonial state to develop a coherent and systematic policy of disease management in the north-western territories. On the ground, these plans soon proved to be much more ambiguous and – particularly in 1939 – strongly linked to the aims of an increased colonial administration and control. The first inoculation in 1938 ended, as we saw, in disaster

¹⁰⁴ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Government Veterinary Officer Watt, Report on the 1939 Contagious Pleuro Pneumonia Inoculation Campaign, n.d. (ca. September 1939), p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Senior Veterinary Surgeon to the Secretary for South West Africa, Windhoek, 7.12.1939, pp. 5 & 7.

¹⁰⁶ NAN SWAA 2174 – A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Officer in Charge Native Affairs to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ohopuho, 27.12.1939.

in terms of its veterinarian outreach. While lungsickness had only occurred in Kaoko occasionally, its rare occurrence suggesting successful strategies of African disease management, it spread dramatically after the campaign. This presented a serious embarrassment for the veterinarians, whose reputation as experts and position as professionals in the colony were still in the making. While officially the second, methodologically and logistically more systematic campaign, aimed at preventing the spread of lungsickness to the Police Zone, it also constituted an attempt to rehabilitate the veterinarian department and its expertise and to bring about a successful eradication of the disease. From the perspective of the colonial state and in terms of administration and control, the campaigns held a slightly different significance. Both inoculations led to an increased and medium-term police presence in the region, which had not been experienced by the local communities for at least two decades. The deployment of a permanent officer in charge of native affairs, Barnard, replacing Hahn, was, as we shall see, part of a highly contested process in which the Windhoek authorities reframed and boosted their policy in Kaoko. The inoculation campaigns of the late 1930s therefore marked an important break in the establishment of colonial administrative structures and mechanisms of control – concerning both people and livestock. Linked to this process was, as will be shown, a growing readiness of the representatives of the state based in the region to use violence as a means of rule. Indeed, by the early 1940s Kaoko's population had to face increasingly harsh displays of power, which gave a heavy blow to the region's socio-economy and social security.

4. Technologies of empire

The role of technology in the context of European imperialist expansion and colonial conquest has repeatedly been addressed by historians of Africa. Daniel Headrick's *Tools of Empire* made a significant and was a widely read contribution as he redirected attention to the question of the place of technology within imperialist projects.¹⁰⁷ Concerned with a specific selection of tools of empire – ships, rifles and quinine – Headrick insightfully demonstrates that a social history of technology needs to carefully historicize the importance of particular objects and practices introduced by Europeans to the frontiers of empire, and to account for the variations depending on time and space, as much as on the realms of society being targeted and affected by the technology under consideration.¹⁰⁸ Headrick's work gave way to numerous approaches to and analyses of technological transformations in various Afri-

¹⁰⁷ Headrick, D.R. (1981), *The Tools of Empire. Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*. New York, Oxford.

¹⁰⁸ Headrick (1981), pp. 9–11.

can contexts, which allowed for a growing differentiation in the thinking about the tools of empire. Among them, Luise White's discussion of African narrative appropriations of cars sharpened a sense of the contradictory meanings attached to technologies, of the multiple layers they are enmeshed with, and of their capability, if not necessity, to expose the ambivalences, anxieties and expectations of social relationships in colonial societies.¹⁰⁹ It is precisely in the complex appropriation of European technologies, of allegedly European objects and practices, where African agency enters the realm of technological transformation. The very idea of new and old objects, of unknown and familiar practices, of foreign and indigenous materiality becomes blurred and refreshingly problematic if approached through the social relationships surrounding the introduction and application of imperial tools and technologies. Recently, these reflections have been applied to the world of representation, and hence colonial writing and imagery have been framed in terms of another facet of a specific tool of empire.¹¹⁰ And, much akin to the guns and ships described by Headrick, texts and images transcend time and space and, both as objects and as representations, expose the ambivalence of interpretation and of practice.¹¹¹

Conceiving of an inoculation campaign in terms of the idea of tools or technologies of empire hence links up with these considerations, while it moves partly back to Headrick's range of objects and practices. As we saw, the inoculation campaigns in Kaoko involved the deployment of various technological deeds and objects – vaccines, cars, guns, uniforms, medical equipment and so forth; they led to the production of specific written forms of representation – statistical accounts, medical diagnosis, and reports by police officers. On the other hand, colonial technicians, i.e. the veterinarians, engaged with a systematic endeavour in the north which exposed them to specific expectations and challenges as scientists and hence as knowledge producers. Therein, their role and status within the colonial administration was still, as we have argued, very ambivalent. But to frame the inoculation campaigns as mere processes of European-driven modernization, of the forceful implementation of a technology, which was completely alien to and unmanageable by the African population would constrict the ambiguities and ambivalences of such processes. We have to carefully investigate how the introduction and application of a modern method of disease management remained determined by the agents involved and by the social relations specific to the colonial society concerned. How did vaccination function as a technology of empire? How

¹⁰⁹ White, L. (1997), *Cars Out of Place: Vampires, Technology, and Labour in East and Central Africa*. In Cooper & Stoler, pp. 436–460.

¹¹⁰ Landau, P.S. (2002), *Empires of the Visual: Photography and Colonial Administration in Africa*. In Landau, P. S. & Kaspin, D. D. (eds), *Images & Empires. Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, pp. 141–171.

¹¹¹ Landau (2002), p. 142.

did it become meaningful beyond its mere materiality? How ought we to understand vaccination once it lost its relevance in terms of a veterinarian plan and was transformed into a technology and practice of colonial rule? Indeed, while the campaigns soon proved to be a disaster with regard to the spread of lungsickness in Kaoko, they were successful in terms of the establishment of administrative structures and operations.

4.1. The constitution of the colonial state in Kaoko

As mentioned above, the two inoculation campaigns of the late 1930s went hand in hand with the restructuring of colonial administration and control in north-western Namibia. The changes took place on various levels and led to transformations of administrative structures, of the political landscape within the region and, last but not least, of the scale of colonial presence. While this eventually favoured, as will be argued, the constitution of the colonial state in Kaoko, it remained a process which was genuinely linked to deep ambivalence within the colonial structures themselves, as well as within the relationship of the administrative bodies to the regional society.

Debates about the future administrative handling of Kaoko began in April 1938, when the acting secretary asked Hahn to comment on the question of adding the north-western reserve to Ovamboland.¹¹² Such a measure promised to increase the commissioner's power and status and he therefore, unsurprisingly, almost enthusiastically took up the idea, arguing that his long-standing concern for and control over native affairs in the northern and north-western territories made an amalgamation of the two regions very sensible. Ironically, historical relationships, which linked western Owambo communities with those in central and northern Kaoko, and which had bothered the colonial authorities for decades, were soon mentioned by Hahn as a genuine African argument sustaining the idea of an all-encompassing native administration.¹¹³ Hahn indeed used the proverbial moment of truth to suggest the straightforward variant of drawing a southern border along the Hoanib River (in southern Kaoko), including the Sesfontein reserve and continuing from there in a straight line via Otjiwazandu through to the Kaoko-Owambo border.¹¹⁴ However named, the native commissioner was very much concerned with if not extending, then at least keeping, his influence on policy in Kaoko, an interest that became clear once the authorities in Windhoek decided to choose a different option.

¹¹² NAN NAO 045 45/1, Judicial Matters Ovamboland & Kaokoveld 1938–41, Acting Secretary for SWA to the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Windhoek, 26.4.1938.

¹¹³ NAN NAO 045 45/1, Judicial Matters Ovamboland & Kaokoveld 1938–41, NC Ovamboland to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ondangua, 22.12.1938.

¹¹⁴ NAN NAO 045 45/1, Judicial Matters Ovamboland & Kaokoveld 1938–41, Chief Native Commissioner to the NC Ovamboland, Hahn, re northern Kaokoveld, 15.10.1938.

Archival information on the considerations and motives, which eventually led the colonial administration to separate Kaoko and Owambo, is limited. Interestingly, an old argument was recycled anew, which had figured repeatedly as an interest in the colonial appropriation of Kaoko in the early decades of the 20th century. In mid-October 1938, the chief native commissioner informed Hahn that – contrary to Ondangwa’s position and wish to have the north-western area added to Owambo – the administration intended to create a separate magisterial district, which would only comprise northern Kaoko and would reserve “the rest of the territory for possible European settlement”.¹¹⁵ What a blow to Hahn’s grand plan of northern native administration! Although the commissioner expressed his discomfort with opening Kaoko for settlement schemes, he remained diplomatic and strategic whilst still trying to promote his own interests. He reinforced Ondangwa’s legitimate claim to control over Kaoko and urged the administration, if they intended to go ahead with European settlement in the region, to exclusively consider areas south of Kaoko Otavi and Ombombo.¹¹⁶ In defiance of the commissioner’s efforts, the Windhoek authorities went even further in their retrenchment of Hahn’s status and influence and decided, as we saw earlier on, to permanently station an officer in charge of native affairs at Ohopuho, who would work independently from the Ondangwa office and would be supervised by the chief native commissioner in the colony’s capital.¹¹⁷ By doing so the colonial state had for the first time defined an administrative entity “Kaokoveld”, meant to constitute a manageable space and hence eliminate the inconsistencies so characteristic of the administration in the region over the past decades. The reorganization of colonial personnel did not go off without a hitch and squabbling between Hahn and Barnard filled the correspondence between the northern outposts and the offices of native affairs in Windhoek for quite a while.¹¹⁸ Hahn’s main argument in this became the question of expertise and of appropriate assessment of the politics in Kaoko, particularly the way in which a successful native administration ought to handle political leaders in the region – needless to say, all requirements Hahn denied Barnard to be capable of fulfilling.

¹¹⁵ Part of southern Kaoko remained in the Outjo district. NAN NAO 045 45/1, Judicial Matters Ovamboland & Kaokoveld 1938–41, Chief Native Commissioner to the NC Ovamboland, Hahn, re northern Kaokoveld, 15.10.1938.

¹¹⁶ NAN NAO 045 45/1, Judicial Matters Ovamboland & Kaokoveld 1938–41, NC Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ondangwa, 22.10.1938.

¹¹⁷ NAN SWAA 1/2/54, Native Affairs Branch, Secretary of the Public Service Commission to the Secretary for SWA, Windhoek, 24.8.1939. Formally the declaration of the Kaokoveld district was done by *Proclamation No. 10 of 1939*.

¹¹⁸ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, Lung sickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, NC Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ondangwa, 20.9.1939 & Hahn to Allen, Ondangwa, 25.9.1939.

Still, the Windhoek authorities had shifted their interests and strategies and considered the direct and permanent control in Kaoko of greater priority than the wounded ego of their main officer of native affairs in the northern territories or the power play between the two men concerned. But the discord continued to smoulder, and when Hahn showed unbroken reluctance to hand over the dealings to Barnard and his unwillingness to stay out of matters concerning Kaoko, particularly negotiations with the headmen,¹¹⁹ the chief native commissioner left no doubt that the Windhoek authorities were unambiguously supporting the newly appointed officer in charge in Ohopuho and his methods.¹²⁰

4.1.1. Tensions in the headmen council system

The political landscape of Kaoko had changed significantly throughout the 1930s. As discussed earlier,¹²¹ colonial administration in the north-western region had been determined by the emergence of a huge criminal case, which eventually led to the deposition and imprisonment of some of the leading Herero politicians, among them Thomas Mutate in Kaoko Otavi and Vita Tom in Otjijandjasemo. While the colonial authorities legitimized their intervention with the successful enforcement of law and order and corresponding removal of individuals who had been found guilty by a court, it has been argued that the criminal case mainly aimed at reshuffling power constellations within the region and at reframing colonial policy in the area. When Vita Tom passed away as a result of his imprisonment, the chief's death opened the way for the introduction of a headmen council, which was modelled according to administrative structures in neighbouring Owambo.

The transformation of the political system in Kaoko remained a problematic process, which took place gradually and varied in its local articulations. Generally, the late 1930s and early 1940s were characterized by a high fluctuation of men being appointed as headmen, sub-headmen and councillors, or being removed from their posts for a whole range of reasons, usually given as incompetence or lacking influence. Indeed, the deprivation of political status and functions and, increasingly, the threat of being removed out of Kaoko became strategies the colonial authorities systematically pursued. The case of two headmen in Okorosave, Moses Ndjai and Edward Tjipepa, was paradigmatic as an illustration of the tensions and ambiguities inherent in the enforcement of the headmen council system in Kaoko. In the course of the second inoculation campaign, Barnard and Watt had repeatedly raised complaints about the lack of cooperation expressed by Ndjai, Tjipepa and people

¹¹⁹ NAN NAO 030 24/12, Kaokoveld stock movements, 1938–46, NC Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ondangwa, 25.5.1939.

¹²⁰ NAN NAO 030 24/12, Kaokoveld stock movements, 1938–46, Chief Native Commissioner to the NC Ovamboland, Windhoek, 20.6.1939.

¹²¹ See Part IV.

considered to be their subjects.¹²² While Watt accused the headmen of having ostensibly been passive during the inoculation at Okorosave, delaying the process by undermining the recruitment of workers and the concentration and eventual inoculation of herds,¹²³ Ndjai and Tjipepa resolutely rejected the veterinarian's allegations, insisting that they had shown continuous loyalty to the colonial government for many years and that they had done everything to support the inoculation campaign.¹²⁴ Their people had neither refused to help, they maintained, nor had there been delays caused by the ways they had organized the driving of stock herds to Kaoko Otavi. Both headmen used the occasion to note that, although the first campaign had led to serious losses in animals and that there would have been plausible reasons to be critical of the veterinarian intervention, they had both supported the second inoculation and they could not explain the charges that Watt and Barnard levelled against them. In an almost verbatim correspondence, Ndjai and Tjipepa expressed their deep incomprehension:

I have heard what the Chief Native Commissioner wrote about Moses and I. I am very sorry to hear that the Government is dissatisfied with us, but do not know when we failed to obey orders or in what way we lacked interest in the recent inoculation campaign. We worked hard at Okorosave and gave the 'Doctor' no cause for complaint.¹²⁵

The discord and mutual accusations were indeed delicate, as they mirrored the rivalry between men negotiating the terms of colonial administration in the region. Barnard and Watt's status was flimsy and their influence contested; both felt under pressure and accountable to Windhoek and yet they struggled to impose their hegemonic claims in Kaoko – Barnard in the realm of administrative control and power, Watt in the domain of animal health and disease management. The tension had been capitalized upon by Hahn, who neglected no opportunity to compensate for the curtailing of his influence and to insist on the incompetence of his colleagues. In a letter to his superior, he refuted the spurious critique of the two headmen:

(...) I fail to understand why Headman Moses N'jai and Edwrad Tjiapipi [Hahn's spelling], referred to in paragraph 2 of his [Barnard's] report, seem to lack interest

¹²² NAN SWAA 2085 A 460/24, Native Chiefs and Headmen Kaokoveld, 1939–1954, OC Native Affairs Barnard to the Chief NC Windhoek, Ohopuho, 22.8.1939.

¹²³ NAN SWAA 2085 A 460/24, Native Chiefs and Headmen Kaokoveld, 1939–1954, Veterinary Officer Watt to the OC Native Affairs Kaokoveld, Ohopuho, 30.9.1939.

¹²⁴ NAN SWAA 2085 A 460/24, Native Chiefs and Headmen Kaokoveld, 1939–1954, Statement of Eduard Tjipepa, recorded by Barnard, Ohopuho, 10.1.1940.

¹²⁵ NAN SWAA 2085 A 460/24, Native Chiefs and Headmen Kaokoveld, 1939–1954, Recorded statement by Edward Tjipepa, Ohopuho, 10.1.1940.

in their work and influence over their people. Headman Moses is the most influential Herero in the Kaokoveld and the other Herero leaders such as Eduard, Willem Tjerihe, Martin Tjihehura, George Hartley and several others of lesser importance all recognise him as the principal Headman of the Herero people. He and the men mentioned are a very respectable and loyal lot of natives. They have on all occasions shown keen co-operation with the Government and rendered every assistance when their influence was required in dealings with the wild Ovahimba people.¹²⁶

Once again the authorities in Windhoek opted for a diplomatic solution. While they remained harsh in their rhetoric, the concern to handle the fresh disturbance in Kaoko cautiously was mainly rooted in the central government's attempt to let sleeping dogs lie. The aggressive posture of removal and formal dismissal of the headmen concerned was maintained; however, it was considered too great a risk to offend the sensibilities of political leaders such as Ndjai and Tjipepa, considered to be well established in their society and hence not exclusively drawing their power from colonial sources.¹²⁷ The political consideration becomes clear if compared to the handling of similar constellations further north, where headmen Karuwapa, Ueripaka and Mariha had mobilized against the campaigns in similar ways. As we shall see, their opposition would trigger a much more violent intervention by the colonial authorities and would lead to one of the heaviest attacks on the pastoral economy in northern Kaoko in the early 1940s.

Let us briefly summarize – as has been shown above, the two inoculation campaigns in Kaoko in the late 1930s were a failure in terms of the veterinarian plan to eradicate lung sickness in the north-western area of the territory. Yet, the campaigns marked a crucial moment in the establishment of administrative structures and in the transformation of the political landscape in the region. The shift from a system of indirect rule relying on cooperation with a few powerful headmen and chiefs, characteristic for the period of the 1920s, to the introduction of a headmen council had been a first, significant, step legitimized by the legal and narrative fabrication of a criminal case. Implementing the council and framing the ways in which it would contribute to the colonial state's advance remained to be sorted out and in this process the campaigns became decisive for various reasons. Firstly, they constituted the first occasion on which the colonial government carried out a systematic and serious census investigation in Kaoko, which concerned numbers of people and of livestock. The implications of this bureaucratic capture were manifold – it enforced a concept of individual (male) ownership and spatial patterns regulating the position and circulation of livestock within

¹²⁶ NAN SWAA 2085 A 460/24, Native Chiefs and Headmen Kaokoveld, 1939–1954, NC Ovambo-land, Hahn, to Allen, 25.9.1939.

¹²⁷ NAN SWAA 2085 A 460/24, Native Chiefs and Headmen Kaokoveld, 1939–1954, Chief Native Commissioner, Windhoek, 26.10.1939.

the region; it also curtailed the mobility of communities and subjects, increasingly requiring them to formally account for their residence, their property and their economic activity. The differentiation of indirect rule into a system of capillary control channels via both the statistical supervision and the administration of Kaoko's inhabitants (through a rapidly increasing number of headmen and councillors) ironically implied, or rather conditioned, the growing need for direct disciplinary intervention by the colonial state, police and military forces. Both inoculation campaigns, particularly the second one, involved the stationing of military detachments in Kaoko and, later, the appointment of South African policemen sent to the region as well as the systematization of recruiting local men as "native constables" and river guards. Against the backdrop of a warranted availability of police and with this the option to rely on force, if required, arbitrariness and short-sighted actions emerged not as a symptom of a deficient colonial administration, as had been the case in southern Kaoko a decade earlier, but as a constitutive element of colonial rule.¹²⁸ These dynamics affected the status and spheres of action of headmen in particular, as they increasingly felt the presence of the state and their dependence on the benevolence of its representatives in the region, first and foremost the officer in charge of native affairs.

This was true in the case of the complaint raised by headman Karuwapa in Ondangwa during the second inoculation campaign in 1939. Physical threats by colonial officers and policemen beating men and women who refused to cooperate became an element of everyday violence experienced in the region, although the few archival sources documenting such assaults can only provide a blurred and brittle sense of how social and physical security was questioned by the actions of various agents of the colonial state and from within the local society in view of an increasing colonial presence in Kaoko.¹²⁹ Violent infringements and interventions by the administrative authorities and their representatives are much more visible in the realm of the pastoral economy. They dramatically give evidence of the systematic undermining and destruction of the means of livelihood in this area eventually culminating in a structural marginalization of Kaoko's livestock production and trade, with long-term repercussions for the region's welfare and socio-economic stability.

¹²⁸ See Cooper, F. (2005), *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, p. 185; Marx, Ch. (2004), *Geschichte Afrikas. Von 1800 bis zur Gegenwart*. Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich, pp. 160–161.

¹²⁹ Everyday and often unspectacular and almost unnoticed forms of violence were a characteristic element of colonial rule in Kaoko throughout the period of South African occupation, and hence integral to the uneasiness of a problematic coexistence of colonialists and colonizers in a marginal area of the territory. See Silvester et al (1998), p. 16.

4.2. Undermining the pastoral economy

Destruction of livestock had affected pastoralists in Kaoko since the mid-1920s, when the colonial administration began to shape Kaoko as a contingent reserve and hence to impose borders around and within the region.¹³⁰ Yet, in the course of the veterinarian projects in the northern reserves since the early 1930s and particularly in and during the immediate aftermath of the inoculation campaigns against lungsickness, confiscations, removals and cattle shootings reached an unprecedented scale. The destructive interventions varied in time and space. They affected border areas much more than they did the central part of the region, and while southern Kaoko experienced repeated constraints on the mobility and reproduction of livestock herds throughout the 1920s, the eastern and northern border areas increasingly came to the fore a decade later.¹³¹ In any case, the colonial authorities were confronted with the challenges posed by the high mobility of people and stock, a precondition for the survival of cattle herds, which secured economic and social reproduction. Colonial policy and the state's claim to control the movement and whereabouts of each and every single head of stock tightened up after 1931¹³² when the first steps towards a veterinarian disease management system were taken with Schmid's inoculation, but changed significantly in scale and outreach in the context of the two big inoculation campaigns in the late 1930s. From its very beginning, state-ordered destruction of stock was linked to the question of compensation. In theory, if shooting cattle was the result of a disciplinary measure, i.e. because animals had been found in cleared or neutral areas or stock was confiscated or shot in order to sanction some form of offence or disobedience, the respective owners could not claim any compensation whatsoever.¹³³ If, however, the destruction of cattle resulted from vaccine production or was founded on veterinarian prevention concerns, or if it had become necessary because an animal was diagnosed as infected or diseased, then the question of compensation became relevant.¹³⁴ In practice, the regulations were prone to misuse and often led to a resolution, which disfavoured African stockowners. As we saw earlier, only a small portion of animal losses during or in the immediate aftermath of the inoculation campaigns were eventually compensated for.¹³⁵ The ambivalence

¹³⁰ See Part III.

¹³¹ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–42, NC Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ondangua, 20.9.1939 and OC Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ohopuho, 7.10.1939.

¹³² Waller describes similar actions in colonial Kenya in the 1930s, Waller (2002), p. 59.

¹³³ For a general discussion of regulations framing the destruction of livestock by state authorities see Miescher (2009), p. 212. Compensations were based on *Proclamation No. 28 of 1920*.

¹³⁴ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, lungsickness Kaokoveld, 1936–39, the Administrator to the Senior Veterinary officer, Windhoek, n.d. (June, 1938).

¹³⁵ NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, Vol. 1, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, 1936–39, Senior Veterinary Sur-

inherent in the system of compensation and the negative experiences it had generated for pastoralists in the region caused a climate of increased mistrust underlying the outbreak of serious conflicts between livestock owners in northern Kaoko and the colonial authorities in the early 1940s.

Once the 1939 campaign was completed, pressure to keep the region “clean”, i.e. preventing the re-introduction of lungsickness, or any other bovine disease from neighbouring Angola or Owambo grew enormously. There is a remarkable growth and intensification of archival references to cases of so-called stray stock, i.e. animals allegedly roaming around without proper supervision by their owners and entering areas they were not supposed to, and these instances gave new impetus to debates about the implementation of colonial control. Transgressions in the realm of stock management and mobility were now exclusively read as forms of African disapproval of, if not rebellion against, state authority. Despite all efforts, Barnard reported in May 1940 that since early April of that year, more than 230 cases of lungsickness had been recorded in the region. This was alarming news requiring immediate attention.¹³⁶ Without taking pains to investigate the origins and causes for the huge number of infected animals, the colonial authorities did not doubt that the re-introduction of lungsickness to Kaoko was the result of the illegal introduction of livestock from neighbouring areas. The argument that the stock concerned bore the official brands of the second inoculation campaign and that the new outbreaks indicated serious shortcomings of the protection expected from the Kabete serum, merely provoked the senior veterinary surgeon to bluntly remark that “It seems difficult to explain why a method which has proved so successful in other parts of Africa should be ineffective in the Kaokoveld”.¹³⁷ The occurrence was hence qualified as not worth turning to in terms of vaccination method.¹³⁸ If the cattle concerned proved to originate from Owambo, the veterinarian argument claimed, all stock had to be destroyed and, the case given, stockowners would not be in a position to expect any form of compensation. His main argument for this harsh intervention was based on the suspicion that cattle had actually been moved deliberately between the two regions, although residents of Kaoko had repeatedly been requested to refrain from doing so, and

geon to the Secretary for SWA, Windhoek, 23.6.1939 and NAN SWAA 2173 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–42, Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Lungsickness Inoculation Campaign Kaokoveld, Windhoek, 7.12.1939 and the Secretary for SWA to the Senior Veterinary Surgeon, Windhoek, 5.1.1940.

¹³⁶ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol.3, 1940–42, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, extract from monthly report May 1940, Ohopuho, n.d.

¹³⁷ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol.3, 1940–42, Senior Veterinary Surgeon to the Officer in Charge of Native Affairs Ohopuho, Windhoek, 10.7.1940.

¹³⁸ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol.3, 1940–42, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Ohopuho, 6.8.1940.

that the colonial administration faced a problem of uncontrolled mobility rather than one of questionable disease management or medical diagnosis.¹³⁹ While this case seemed of limited relevance at first sight, and was assumed to be settled with the eventual destruction of stock on both sides,¹⁴⁰ i.e. in the Ombombo area in southern Kaoko and beyond the border in Ongandjera, it revealed the tensions within colonial administration and the ambiguities and disquiet the gradual imposition of colonial rule cemented within the local African communities. A telegram by Hahn, who entered the debates claiming that the border area between Kaoko and Owambo was as much within his scope as it was Barnard's, illustrates the continuing uneasiness of the colonial bodies and their representatives in the north as they wrestled with the socio-political implications of the circulation of cattle. This was particularly evident when problems surfaced on the region's coercive would-be margins, where alliance, affiliation and the constitution of socio-political status were increasingly failing. Hahn's narration of the account of a bull, which was among the more than 40 head of cattle destroyed in the area falling under his direct jurisdiction, was unconsciously emblematic of these tensions:

Herders and chief Tshanikas messengers allege that the animals contracted the disease after coming in contact with cattle in Ovamboland subsequent to their straying from the Kaokoveld. This brings total animal dead and destroyed to 38. To this must be added 1 Bull which one Kamati refused to give up to chief Tshanika as messengers understand. Bull belongs to Hiokambi who is well known to Barnard.(...) the owner of the Bull should be instructed to accompany his police boys to Kamatis werf and that police destroy animal without further delay and that native Kamati be suitably dealt with for refusing to give up the Bull. In the past he has always regarded himself as subject of the Ongandjera chief but lately he refused to obey Tshanika and seems to regard Hiokambi as his headman.¹⁴¹

The archival sources remain silent about Hahn's understanding of dealing "suitably" with Kamati, who had refused to submit to the colonial authorities' instructions. The possible repercussions of threats such as these became much more visible in a case which seemed similar in the beginning and eventually culminated in a purposeful destruction of herds never experienced before in the northern territories. It was no coincidence that it concerned

¹³⁹ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol.3, 1940–42, Senior Veterinary Surgeon to Chief Native Commissioner, Windhoek, 19.6.1940.

¹⁴⁰ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol.3, 1940–42, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ohopuho, 20.5.1940 & Chife Native Commissioner to the Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Windhoek, 3.7.1940.

¹⁴¹ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, Lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol.3, 1940–42, Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for South west Africa, Ondangua, 2.8.1940. I have slightly adapted the telegram's stilted language to a more readable form by merely adding articles and pronouns.

a community living in the vicinity of the Kunene, considering that the northern border and its supervision had become the colonial administration's main sore spot.

In early 1940, immediately after the second inoculation campaign had been completed, Barnard urged the authorities in Windhoek to attend to the situation on the northern border. As we saw, a cordon along the Kunene River had been cleared in 1939¹⁴² but neither the cattle-free zone nor the movement of stock and people over the river were ever under control. The ways in which the colonial authorities handled the situation on the Kunene were underpinned by two separate narratives, which had been closely interwoven since the early 1930s. Indeed, while attempts to permanently establish administrative and police control intensified, the veterinarian ambitions to keep Kaoko free of animal disease were, as we shall see, abandoned. The report by the senior veterinary surgeon to the chief native commissioner in March 1940 left no doubt that the original plan to "clean" the northern areas from lungsickness and then to use them as a buffer between the farming area inside the Police Zone and the Angolan territory had failed.¹⁴³ While the cleared area in southern Kaoko kept its function as buffer, a large portion of the region was in fact declared to be infected.¹⁴⁴

Regardless of this acknowledged failure, securing the border within the logic of state control kept its relevance and was in any case not abandoned. Reams of contentions between pastoralists living in the vicinity of the Kunene and colonial personnel stationed in the region, particularly police, left numerous traces in the archives. Against all odds, the communities living north and south of the river persisted in taking their livestock over the river, and the reproduction of herds remained dependent on the extended use of pastures and waters on both sides, particularly in periods of ecological shortage and distress. Yet by 1940, the possibility of evading colonial control on the northern border weakened and circumventing regulations became increasingly risky.¹⁴⁵ In January 1940 Barnard asked that additional river guards be stationed at those drifts, which were evidently used by stockowners to take their animals over the river, and his request was immediately approved.¹⁴⁶ The increase to 10 officers patrolling the Kunene drifts and the cleared zone along the river was

¹⁴² NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Secretary for SWA, Ohopuho, 20.7.1939.

¹⁴³ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Senior Veterinary Surgeon to the Chief Native Commissioner, Cattle Free Zones Outside Police Zone, Windhoek, 14.3.1940, Miescher (2009), p. 232.

¹⁴⁴ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, Senior Veterinary Surgeon to the Chief Native Commissioner, Cattle Free Zones Outside Police Zone, Windhoek, 14.3.1940. The Owambo and Okavango regions as a whole were declared infected areas too.

¹⁴⁵ The changing situation on the Kunene after the second inoculation campaign has, according to Bollig, been confirmed by oral information. Bollig (1998b), pp. 516–17.

¹⁴⁶ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 1939–40, the Secretary for South West Africa to the Administrator, Windhoek, 5.1.1940.

a consequence of the officer in charge constantly suspecting the communities in northern and north-western Kaoko of smuggling animals back and forth on a daily basis. Indeed, the mobility of large stock and the dispersion of herds had gained particular urgency in the context of a deteriorating cattle health situation. By mid-1940, the communities in the upper margins of the region had repeatedly raised concerns about incidences of lungsickness indicating the spread of the disease among their herds. But Barnard bluntly rejected people's warnings, dismissing them as overreactions, and pursued his scheme of simply destroying stock suspected to have been illegally introduced to the region.¹⁴⁷ In August 1940, the situation on the Kunene deteriorated and began to show serious symptoms of a pattern, which would favour a series of violent acts, both against people and against cattle herds. Problems had arisen when a group of policemen stationed at Enyandi, a post situated some 35 km west of Tshimhaka while on patrol encountered a group of people driving large herds of stock and numerous donkeys across the Kunene.¹⁴⁸ The guards apparently fired some shots at the cattle in the river and killed four animals they found in the reeds along the southern riverbank.¹⁴⁹ When the river guards asked people to present permits for their donkeys, the situation escalated and some of the herders were said to have attacked the policemen with knives, injuring at least two of them seriously. The confrontation eventually led to the policemen shooting at the herders, injuring a few of them and killing one man. Barnard immediately proceeded to Tshimhaka and began to question the headmen in the area, all of whom denied knowing the people involved in the shootings, let alone being in a position to identify them as members of their communities.¹⁵⁰ That a man died and several policemen were injured appeared to be secondary in the colonial authorities' response, and there is no indication in the archival documents that the administration took any trouble to investigate the shootings in terms of cases of manslaughter or attempted murder. The legal omission was conditioned and caused by the fact that the shootings revealed another aspect that was, again from the colonial state's perspective, of far greater significance. Barnard spelled out the situation looming on the territory's northern border in a letter to the chief native commissioner:

¹⁴⁷ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ohopuho, 9.8.1940.

¹⁴⁸ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ohopuho, 9.8.1940.

¹⁴⁹ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Assaults on River Guards by Angolan Ovahimbas, Ohopuho, 8.9.1940.

¹⁵⁰ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Assaults on River Guards by Angolan Ovahimbas, Ohopuho, 8.9.1940.

As far as could be ascertained, the assaults were committed by ex-Kaokoveld Natives most of whom moved to Angola before the 1938 inoculation campaign against lung sickness commenced. These Ovahimbas are said to be very disappointed with the life there. Grazing is very scarce in the southern parts and the Natives must pay an annual tax and work without payment for the Portuguese. This does not suit the Ovahimbas at all for they, like their cousins in the Kaokoveld, wish to be a law under themselves and detest work. They accuse the Portuguese of oppressing and ill-treating them, but are actually only being made to toe the line. // Large herds of cattle are concentrated all along the River from Tshimhaka to the West of Onjezu, and I have information from several sources that the Ovahimbas are determined to cross into the Kaokoveld.¹⁵¹

The months to come, from September to December 1940, were marked by an almost uninterrupted destruction of cattle crossing the river, and these interventions seem to have occupied the river guards on a daily basis.¹⁵² An inspection report the officer in charge sent to the Windhoek authorities in mid-November described how the police officers had been committed to containing uncontrolled stock movements. Apparently, the communities on both sides of the river had quickly adapted to the increased police presence and used different drifts at different times in order to circumvent the control of the whereabouts of their herds.¹⁵³ But the ultimate shift in direction and scale occurred when Hahn took over the administration of Kaoko again in early 1941, as Barnard had left the region in order to apply for enrolment into the South African military forces.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lung sickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Assaults on River Guards by Angolan Ovahimbas, Ohopuho, 8.9.1940.

¹⁵² NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lung sickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ohopuho, 9.8.1940, NC Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for SWA, Ondangua, 31.8.1940, The Administrator to the Secretary to the Prime Minister Pretoria, Windhoek, 25.9.1940, The Administrator to the Secretary to the Prime Minister Pretoria, Windhoek, 21.10.1940.

¹⁵³ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lung sickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge Native Affairs to the Chief Native Commissioner, Inspection report: Kunene River, Ohopuho, 12.11.1940.

¹⁵⁴ Barnard left Kaoko in early 1941 but returned to the region in late October of the same year, his plan to enrol as a soldier in the South African Armed Forces having apparently failed. Officially the officer in charge's leave was eventually declared as sick leave. Barnard had been replaced temporarily by officer de Witt. NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lung sickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Chief Native Commissioner, handwritten notes, March 1941, NAN SWAA 1/2/54 – NA Branch, S 6/136/1 – NA Branch NC Ohopuho 1, The Secretary for SWA to the Secretary to the Prime Minister Pretoria, Windhoek, 31.10.1941. On the recruitment of Namibians into the South African Army during the Second World War see Dale, R. (1980), *The Armed Forces as an Instrument of South African Policy in Namibia*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1: 57–71, and Gordon, R. (1993), *The Impact of The Second World War on Namibia*. *Journal of Southern African Studies. Special Issue: Namibia: Africa's Youngest Nation*, Vol. 19, No. 1: 147–165.

Hahn's reappearance on the scene was caused by an incident, which alarmed the colonial authorities in Windhoek, namely the rumour that herds of large stock, more than 3000 animals in total, had crossed the Kunene from Angola into Kaoko in a period between late January and early March of that same year.¹⁵⁵ Upon receiving this news at the capital, the chief native commissioner had immediately started informal discussions with leading officers of the police and military forces about a possible intervention on the north-western border of the territory. Simultaneously, the head of the native affairs department envisaged the re-involvement of Hahn, as the commissioner in Ondangwa was familiar with the area and the headmen residing there.¹⁵⁶ Two weeks later, Hahn reported in a telegram that he had proceeded to Kaoko and had first made sure that any cattle introduced from Angola would be identified as soon as possible and, secondly, had taken up negotiations with headmen Ueripaka, Mariha and Karuho in order to secure the supervision and control of any mobility along and across the Kunene. Still, Hahn could not yet make sense of the rumours referring to several thousands of animals having crossed the river from the north.¹⁵⁷ Suspicion emerged that the herds concerned were owned by families and households, who had left northern Kaoko in 1939, in order to evade the inoculation campaigns and that these animals were now being gradually driven back to the Namibian territory. Rather than being an instance and fact to be established beyond any doubt, the fabricated continuity or congruence between the exodus out of Kaoko in the late 1930s and the re-immigration in early 1941 fed both the rhetoric of a veterinarian rationale, i.e. the prevention of lungsickness spreading in the region, and legitimized a drastic intervention by the colonial state.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, by the end of the month, the commissioner said he had collected and isolated all cattle that had entered Kaoko illegally counting the animals at 456 head of livestock.¹⁵⁹ As the Kunene was by then in high flood, it was impossible to send people and their stock back, so Hahn had preferred to isolate the herds at selected places and to make sure that policemen would prevent these coming into contact with any other livestock. He commissioned Ueripaka and the other headmen to fulfil their duty and keep an eye on the immigrants. Anticipating the ways the Windhoek authorities might handle the significant movement

¹⁵⁵ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, the Secretary for South West Africa to the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, Windhoek, 7.3.1941.

¹⁵⁶ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, the Secretary for South West Africa to the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, Windhoek, 7.3.1941.

¹⁵⁷ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for South West Africa, Ohopuho, 20.3.1941.

¹⁵⁸ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for South West Africa, Ohopuho, 31.3.1941.

¹⁵⁹ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, handwritten notes, n.d. (end of March 1941).

of people and stock across the river, Hahn referred to a new aspect, which entered the debates by way of information provided from the communities who had moved southwards:

(The) Ovahimbas concerned alleged that they were suddenly attacked and fired upon and this caused them hurriedly to collect as much stock as they could and flee for their lives. They alleged that seventeen of their number including women and children had been taken prisoners and five to six hundred cattle had been confiscated. In view of the fact that the Portuguese authorities had recently given repeated assurance that they would take every precaution against such happenings I consider the administration should bring this new incident forcibly to their notice.¹⁶⁰

Indeed, the situation in southern Angola had severely tightened up in early 1940, when the Portuguese colonial administration engaged in a violent military intervention against the African population.¹⁶¹ Oral histories from southern Angola narrate the violent incursion, which was linked to the expansion and enforcement of a system of taxation by the colonial state. The warlike situation involved executions, imprisonment and confiscations of herds, leading to a chaotic constellation in which European military, police, and African mercenaries alike misused their physical and technological force and power for arbitrary appropriation of resources and livestock.¹⁶² The political rationale behind the colonial intervention aimed at transforming wealthy pastoralists into wage labourers and to integrate the southern parts of the territory into the colonial economy once and for all. The raids, the destruction of livelihoods and the killings led to the dislocation of many people in southern Angola, and eventually forced parts of the population over the Kunene River into Kaoko.

The authorities in Windhoek conceived of the outbreaks of violence in the Portuguese territory as a matter of ineffective colonial control, and hence saw no reason to revise their standpoint with regard to the handling of immigrants and their herds. While the level of the Kunene waters required some patience, the secretary unambiguously advised Hahn that a moratorium of three weeks would be accorded, but that all animals concerned would then have to be destroyed.¹⁶³ Still, Hahn took up negotiations with the Portuguese authorities, because the situation on the other side of the river threatened to continue to send immigrants streaming from southern Angola into the Namibian territory – and would therefore

¹⁶⁰ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, handwritten notes, n.d. (end of March 1941).

¹⁶¹ Duarte de Carvalho, R. (2000), *Encapsulation, Prosperity and Hunger amongst the Kuvale of Southern Angola*. In Bollig & Gewalt, p. 524.

¹⁶² Duarte de Carvalho (2000), p. 525.

¹⁶³ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, the Secretary for South West Africa to the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, Windhoek, 31.3.1941.

preoccupy the administration in the northern areas.¹⁶⁴ But, as we shall see, productive co-operation with the Portuguese in terms of a successful colonial administration and control of the border area was far from being within the administration's reach and, in late April 1941, Hahn reported to Windhoek that the 456 head of cattle had been destroyed and that the destruction would no doubt leave a mark:

The destruction of this large number of cattle in their (the Ovahimba leaders') presence and that of many followers will leave a deep and lasting impression on their minds especially as many of the animals destroyed were owned by them. They accepted the order of destruction and showed keen interest in understanding the whole matter.¹⁶⁵

Indeed, the native commissioner left no doubt that the massive intervention was a staging of colonial force and violence and hence had to be read ultimately as a display of power which did not require any other legitimization in terms of veterinary policy or the like. The abandonment of a perspective in the realm of animal health and management had spotlighted the South African colonial administration's interest in imposing effective control over people – and to that end, control of their herds as well – in the northern border area again. As we shall see, the destruction in March 1941 marked the eventual end of the administration's attempt of dividing communities north and south of the Kunene River and of undermining the region's pastoral economy. Beyond that, it reflected the uncanny synergy with Portuguese policies in southern Angola, although the South African authorities remained unbowed in their arrogant and presumptuous perspective on their northern colonial counterpart.

4.2.1. Ovahimba mercenaries, Ovakuware raiders and colonial misdemeanours on the Kunene River

As mentioned earlier, the immigrations from southern Angola into Kaoko had been the result of a serious outbreak of violence in the neighbouring colony between the Portuguese authorities and various African communities. While the South African authorities framed the problematic situation on the river as evidence of the reluctance of the Ovahimba communities living on both sides of the Kunene to submit to colonial rule, the escalation of

¹⁶⁴ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for South West Africa, Ondangua, 12.4.1941.

¹⁶⁵ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, the Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for South West Africa, Ondangua, 28.4.1941. On this massive destruction of cattle also see Bollig (1998b), p. 515.

conflict in the early 1940s was at its heart symptomatic for the shortcomings of colonial power on its territorial periphery.

With regard to the “illegal” and uncontrolled movement of people and animals over the northern river, Hahn and Barnard had eventually found unanimity: the administration faced the notorious unwillingness by the communities residing in the northern and north-western parts of Kaoko to accept colonial authority. People living in the vicinity of the Kunene were blamed for switching between the two colonial territories, depending on their own interests, advantages and intentions. In an early report about the immigration of a particular headman Kotjiuta and his followers from Angola, the narrative parameters appeared very clear:

He (headman Kotjiuta) admitted he refused to obey orders before his imprisonment in 1938 and there is no doubt that he is still defying the Portuguese authorities. If he is permitted to reside here, both Angolan and Kaokoveld natives will resort to crossing the Kunene River should they find themselves in trouble in either country, and this will seriously interfere with both Governments’ efforts to control the Ovahimbas.¹⁶⁶

In view of the alleged African opportunism and zigzagging, the tuning of administrative measures and policies between the two colonial powers would have been decisive, particularly from a South African perspective. Both the authorities in Windhoek and the colonial officers in the northern regions repeatedly tried to convince the administration in Angola and in the Portuguese metropolis to bring the southern part of their colony under control, to clear the banks of the Kunene in order to establish a stock-free zone and eventually to accomplish inoculation campaigns.¹⁶⁷ But by mid-March 1941, it became apparent that while the Portuguese repeatedly signalled their willingness to cooperate,¹⁶⁸ all negotiations halted and that for reasons, which remain unclear, the Angolan authorities saw no need to adjust their strategies to meet South African requirements.¹⁶⁹ Instead, the Portuguese administration had opted for a violent way, although the military incursion against the Ovakuvare communities that, as we saw, involved stock confiscations, imprisonment and the killing

¹⁶⁶ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lung sickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner, Ohopuho, 5.1.1941.

¹⁶⁷ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lung sickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Secretary for South West Africa to the Secretary to the Prime Minister Pretoria, Lung sickness Kaokoveld, Control Measures, Windhoek, 21.10.1940.

¹⁶⁸ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lung sickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, Telegram to the Secretary for South West Africa, 16.11.1940.

¹⁶⁹ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lung sickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Secretary for South West Africa, Stock Movements and Portuguese Affairs. Establishment of Cattle Free Zone along the Kunene River, Ondangua, 12.4.1941.

of people, had triggered a process of social chaos. Increasingly, Hahn and Barnard began to legitimize the difficult situation on the northern border, which threatened to disintegrate, with the incapability of the Portuguese administration to impose a systematic and coherent native policy in southern Angola and prevent the uncontrolled exodus of people and stock. Statements given by representatives of the refugee communities evidenced the counter-productivity of the military intervention, which was said to lack a political strategy and which eventually revived a disruptive raiding economy soon overlapping into northern Kaoko. An interview with Katiti Kamohe, an Ovahimba headman who had left Angola and settled at Enyandi in northern Kaoko was a case in point:

The Portuguese ordered us to help them when they were at war with the Ovakuvare, but they have gone back to their homes and left us unprotected. The Ovakuvare are killing us and taking our stock away. The other day they attacked a kraal, killed three people and took the stock away. They wounded the women and children who are here now. Look at their wounds. We live in fear and expect the Ovakuvare to return at any time. Where is our cattle? Munemuhoro (a headman in Kaoko) was here and ordered us to take our cattle away from the River. The cattle is in the hills and the Ovakuvare can take them for all we care, but our small stock is at the crossing and we are coming to your Government. The Portuguese oppress anyone.¹⁷⁰

According to information provided by African residents on both sides, the military expedition against the Ovakuvare communities had left a deep impact, both on the society and the regional economy. The confiscation of more than 12,000 head of livestock constituted a blow to the pastoral economy of incomparable scale never experienced before.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, men from the scattered Ovahimba communities, both north and south of the river, had been involved as mercenaries either for the Portuguese military forces or as allies to the Ovakuvare parties.¹⁷² When the colonial military forces retrenched from the area, having killed some of the Ovakuvare leaders and imprisoned others, and mostly, having deprived large parts of their African adversaries of their livestock, pressure on those communities who still owned cattle grew enormously. Eventually, as the statement quoted above

¹⁷⁰ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge NA, Barnard, Interview with Angolan Omuhimba Katiti Kahoie & 10 Others at Enyandi on the 24th of July, 1941,

¹⁷¹ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Hahn, to the Chief Native Commissioner Windhoek, Stock Movements and Portuguese Affairs, Ondangua, 24.1.1941.

¹⁷² NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner Windhoek, Stock Movements & Portuguese Affairs, Ohopuho, 28.10.1940.

illustrates, raids on animals and people spread over the region and forced stockowners to move southwards into Kaoko.¹⁷³

In the end, the refugees' hopes and expectations remained a mere narrative element of a South African pretence at providing meaningful help. They again faced an administration refusing them the right to stay and destroying their herds. And while the South African administration insisted on their superiority in terms of policy and political strategy, thereby setting itself apart from the alleged arbitrariness and destructiveness of the Portuguese, performing acts of violence as a means of breaking African opposition to the disruption of their socio-economic resources had in fact become a characteristic of both colonial powers.

4.3. Gender and the technologies of empire

The foregoing chapters have been concerned with the emergence of a veterinarian policy and intervention in northern Namibia. The main argument has been that, while the two inoculation campaigns in Kaoko in the late 1930s were a disaster and complete failure in terms of animal disease management, they marked a turning point in the history of the establishment of a colonial administration in the region. Indeed, after the campaigns the presence of the colonial state was felt far more than before. The establishment of an administrative centre at Ohopuho with Barnard stationed there as permanent officer in charge of native affairs paralleled the increased number of policemen on duty in the region. On the other hand, the system of indirect rule based on a headman council and their auxiliaries, sub-headmen and councillors, increasingly assumed shape and began to yield fruit. In the context of the inoculation campaigns, the new administrative order proved its functionality and the control and supervision of mobility, both of cattle and people, was intently and rather successfully targeted. The continuous destruction of stock, whether through negligent inoculation or, by the early 1940s, on the occasion of mass shootings combined with the serious prevention of movements of livestock across the reserve's external borders forced the regional pastoral economy into a structural isolation and undermined the survival and reproduction of herds under barren conditions, both in terms of the ecological, as well as the socio-political landscape.

It has been argued that the inoculation campaigns can be understood in terms of their role as tools or technologies of empire and hence investigate how their application shaped and changed the social relations in which they were embedded. Indeed, inoculation became an arena in which ambitious representatives of the colonial state could climb the social

¹⁷³ NAN SWAA 2174 A 470/27, lungsickness Kaokoveld, Vol. 3, 1940–1942, Officer in Charge Native Affairs, Barnard, to the Chief Native Commissioner Windhoek, Introduction of Stock from Angola and Portuguese Affairs, Ohopuho, 28.7.1941.

ladder. This applied to colonial officers, such as Barnard and Hahn, as much as it did to the veterinarians spreading their influence to the northern parts of the colony. The power play between Hahn and Barnard, who fought over their respective influence in Kaoko, over pseudo ethnological expertise and over the knowledge of the region's future, was symptomatic for an administration consolidating its position. On the other hand, the veterinarians and their discipline were still emerging in colonial Namibia, and the northern inoculation campaigns were significant for their claim to recognition as a new generation of modern, colonial technicians.

For the region's African communities the inoculation campaigns left an imprint, which went far beyond the realm of animal disease, although the long-term repercussions of the methodological failure provoked by the veterinarians remain to be explored. As has been said, once again the colonial administration targeted men exclusively and, in particular, those considered as influential either politically or economically. Headmen and wealthy stockowners had a say in the negotiations preceding the two campaigns and some of them, such as headman Karuwapa, tried to outbid their remaining scope of action. The headmen had their own rationale, as the transformation of mobility patterns and of herd management posed a threat to one of their main sources of power. The manoeuvring of headman Ueripaka, at one stage organizing, or at least tolerating, a significant exodus of people and animals to southern Angola and later supporting the police in order to get hold of people returning to Kaoko, illustrates the ambiguities within the region's political landscape in the context of the inoculation campaigns. In contrast to the local elite, the broader social responses to and impact of the veterinarian intervention remain much more elusive. Evading the campaigns was a strategy probably engaged with much more extensively than the few cases recorded in the archive might suggest. Isolating single animals or herds, i.e. spreading livestock property over vast geographical areas or even taking herds to the region's outer edges, were strategies used in the past to counter threats and challenges to social and physical security, and their application could represent ways of countering both a disease such as lungsickness and a state-orchestrated campaign, with ambiguous claims to cattle concerned.

The impact of the inoculation campaigns on gender relations remains unclear. The colonial narrative and practice undoubtedly enforced a perception of the pastoral economy as predominantly male, and the same applies for knowledge on disease and disease management. Female ownership of cattle, the role of women in the pastoral production and in the circulation of cattle within the local society was systematically pushed to the narrative margin, as it countered and rivalled the logics of a colonial understanding of economic processes and the ways they had to be channelled and controlled. Throughout both inocula-

tion campaigns, the role of women was reduced to a subsidiary one – they were forced into the construction of crushes and they were ordered to support the men in concentrating the herds at the inoculation centres. To perceive women as individual pastoralists, as stockowners and as knowledgeable with regard to disease management definitely lay beyond the colonial imagination.

Part VI

Gender & Visuality

Colonial Photography in Kaoko in the first half of the 20th century

“When the missionary came he made Tjongoha chief by taking a photograph of him”

Comment by Salatiel Muharukua, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002, on a photograph of Tjongoha, published in Fourie, L., Hahn, C.H.L. & Vedder, H. “The Native Tribes of South West Africa”, Cape Town, 1928, p. 189.

“The woman is not from our place. Women did not ride on horses in those days”

Comment by Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi on a photograph by H. Roth, showing a woman on a donkey near Kaoko Otavi, 1951 (NAN 2984), Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002,

1. Introduction

The following analysis is concerned with the visual history of Kaoko in the 20th century. The decision to include a chapter on visual imagery and to explore its significance for narratives on gender will enable us to develop an additional perspective on many issues, which have already been addressed in the chapters before. We shall come back to individuals, places and events already mentioned, but will approach them in what follows through the lens of a camera, so to speak. The point of departure will be the discussion of photographs taken by Heinz Roth in Kaoko in 1951. Roth, a businessman and amateur photographer from Windhoek, was one of the 15 members of an all-male expedition to the region initiated by the Cape Town-based Bernard Carp, adventurer, hunter and collector of Dutch origin.¹ The expedition for the purpose of collecting flora and fauna was commissioned and financed by the Transvaal, King Williamstown and National Museum of Southern Rhodesia.² In the course of the journey through Kaoko, Heinz Roth took more than 170 black and white photographs and produced a 16mm film.³ Roughly half of the photographs in this collection produce a

¹ Green (1952), p. 12. Roth himself confirmed his particular interest in photography he pursued as an informal activity. Professionally he was also involved in scientific inspection of soil conditions for the South African administration. Interview with Heinz Roth, Windhoek, 18.3.2002. The 15 members include only the “white” men. Several “coloured and native” skimmers and “camp servers” took part in the expedition. See Green (1952), p. 27. The guides and translators Carp and his fellows relied on are not mentioned at all.

² NAN Accession 340, B. Carp to Dr. Martin, Windhoek Museum, 10.10.1949; NAN Accession 340, B. Carp to the secretary for South West Africa, 21.2.1951.

³ There are 172 photographs on Kaoko in the Roth collection of the National Archives of Namibia in Windhoek. Roth gave part of his photographic collection to the Scientific Society in Windhoek and to a library in Germany (Wolfskehlen/Rietstadt, Hessen), where his former wife was staying (Interview with H. Roth, Windhoek, 18.3.2002). It has not been possible to trace a copy of the film up to now. Neither do the National Archives of Namibia, the South African Film Archives nor

comprehensive visual representation of Kaoko's landscape and the "native" inhabitants of the region. Juxtaposed with them, a substantial part of the images – as we shall see later on – depicted the everyday nature of the expedition, the male members on one hand and their cars and trucks on the other.

I want to interpret and contextualise the photographs of Heinz Roth in various ways. They can be read as historical documents, which emerged in a particular historical context, i.e. colonial Kaoko in the mid-20th century. As such, these visuals resulted from specific photographic occasions, depicting intersections of places and people, of fluid histories and static moments, of vision and performance. The photographs of Roth can also be read against the historical genesis of visual narratives on Kaoko from the early 20th century onwards, patterned and framed by missionaries, travellers, settlers and colonial officers visually reflecting on and representing the region and its inhabitants. Not least, these photographs constitute vestiges of an engagement of men and women in Kaoko with photography as a medium and technology, and as a space of self-representation.

Before discussing a selection of single photographs, some points to be kept in mind when using photographic images as historical sources in general and in Namibian historiography in particular will be addressed.

Photography's emergence in the second half of the 19th century went hand in hand with vivid debates around its value in representing the world.⁴ What was and, for many decades remained, particularly striking, compelling or discomfiting about the medium was the temptation to consider it an objective and authentic rendering of reality.⁵ The enthusiastic claim to see "nature's pencil at work", as it was prominently raised by one of the pioneers of the technology,⁶ gradually gave way to more cautious views. Still, the alleged "analogical relationship between a photograph and its referent",⁷ the "reality" it depicts, remains an

the Transvaal Museum have a copy. The latter does have films of an expedition by Bernard Carp to the Caprivi in 1949 and of similar enterprises in other southern African regions (catalogued under "Smithers' films donated to the Transvaal Museum").

⁴ Trachtenberg, A. (1980), *Classic Essays on photography*. New Haven, unites 19th century commentaries on photography by contemporary scientists, intellectuals and writers such as Edgar Allen Poe and others, which document these debates. The main concern of these early discussions was, significantly, centred on the question whether photography was to be considered a form of *art* or not.

⁵ Burke, P. (2003), *Augenzeugenschaft. Bilder als historische Quellen*. Berlin; Theye, Th. (1989), Introduction to *Der geraubte Schatten. Photographie als ethnographisches Dokument*. München, Luzern, p. 8; Geary, Ch. M. (1988), *Images from Bamum. German Colonial Photography at the Court of King Njoya, Cameroon, West Africa, 1902–1915*. Washington, London, p. 10.

⁶ Talbot, W.H.F. (1980), A Brief Historical Sketch of the Invention of the Art. In Trachtenberg, p. 28.

⁷ Edwards, E. (2001), *Raw Histories. Photographs, Anthropology and Museums*. Oxford, New York, p. 10. See also John Tagg's discussion of Roland Barthes' realist position, Tagg, J. (1988), *The Burden of Representation. Essays on Photographies and Histories*. New York, p. 1.

analytical challenge, as long as “one connotation always present in a photograph is that it is a pure denotation; that is simply what it means to recognise it as a photograph rather than some sort of image”.⁸ Still, photographs are not unmediated, they are circumscribed by ideas of what is relevant or significant. A photograph is “a fragment of space and time (...) dislocated from the flow of life from which it was extracted”.⁹ By privileging one moment – against any other – it claims essence and suggests relevance. It is this act of selecting, framing and capturing the photographic inscription, which becomes the first interpretation.¹⁰ As such, photographs – like any other articulation of the past – are anchored within specific discursive fields, which constitute the ways they become historically meaningful. But what kind of past is enclosed in photographs? How do photographs represent the past? Are historical photographs valuable documents produced by contemporary eyewitnesses,¹¹ or are they mere expressions of biased, stereotyped visions of historical agents? What is the relevance of the form – visual in contrast to written or oral – the past is mediated through? What do photographs – as fractured representations of the world – mean in historical terms? These concerns highlight the difficulties in understanding – “reading” – photographs and in using them carefully as historical sources. The questions raised may best be addressed first by insisting on the relevance of context – in the sense of an active attribution of significance¹² – and secondly, on the need to relate photographs to broader narratives of the past.¹³ It is the multiplicity of meaning captured in images which makes them analytically challenging.¹⁴

In this paper I will try to show that it is the photographs themselves, as historical documents, which enable us to raise and address these questions.¹⁵ To do so, the photographs of

⁸ Mitchell, W. J. T. (1994a), *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago, p. 284.

⁹ Edwards, p. 8. See also Peters, M. and Mergen B. (1973), ‘Doing the Rest’: The Uses of Photographs in American Studies. *American Quarterly*: p. 287.

¹⁰ Edwards, p. 10; Bourdieu, P. et al (1981), *Eine illegitime Kunst. Die sozialen Gebrauchsweisen der Photographie*. Frankfurt a.M., p. 18.

¹¹ Burke (2003), p. 145, rather problematically insists on the documentary value of historical images produced by eye-witnesses, exemplified by 19th century painting and early ethnographic photography. He hereby perpetuates a 19th century concept of *Anschaung* and, implicitly, the vision of history through a *Momentbild*. See Hoffmann, D. (1985), *Fotografie als historisches Dokument. Fotogeschichte. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie*, p. 4. For a more historicised discussion of the documentary mode of photography, see Tagg (1988), pp. 11ff.

¹² Edwards (2001), p. 108.

¹³ See Jenkins, P. (1990), In the Eye of the Beholder: an Exercise in the Interpretation of two Photographs taken in Cameroon Early in this Century. In Henige, D. & Mc Caskie, T.C. (eds.), *West African Economic and Social History. Studies in Memory of Marion Johnson*. Madison, pp. 93 & 101.

¹⁴ Hayes, P. & Bank, A. (2002), Introduction. *Kronos, Special Issue on Visual History*, No. 27, p. 2.

¹⁵ See Ranke, W. (1977), Zur sozialdokumentarischen Fotografie um 1900. *Kritische Berichte* 5:

Heinz Roth need to be integrated into the flow of north-western Namibia's history and the dynamics of the specific moment they tend to freeze within their frame, i.e. colonial Kaoko in the post-World War II era. Furthermore, Roth's images took up and perpetuated elements of visual narratives emerging in Southern Africa in the early decades of the 20th century.

1.1. Colonial photography in Southern Africa and Namibia

The gradual spread of photography in Southern Africa from the late 19th century onwards followed the various paths of colonial and capitalist expansion and paralleled the emergence of new technologies of the camera.¹⁶ Explorers, traders, missionaries and hunters brought the camera into the interior of the subcontinent and used it as an "objective" means of recording, researching and classifying the human and natural life on a continent widely unknown to them. Through the camera they enabled themselves to take possession of their social and cultural world.¹⁷ In the metropolises the new technology matured in the context of modernizing states, often in the service of institutional power and control, and the mechanization of visual reproduction.¹⁸ In the same way and entangled with its metropolitan counterpart, photography in the colonies developed and functioned within contexts of identification, typology and surveillance of people, nature and species, of social and physical landscapes.¹⁹ In view of the history of photography's use, it has been argued that the medium "followed the gun into Africa", identifying the camera as a "tool of empire", and paying historiographical attention to the shared – technological, paradigmatic, linguistic and conceptual – terrains between hunting and photography.²⁰ As will be shown, this "liaison" indeed was relevant in the Namibian context too,²¹ and it came into play in Heinz Roth's photographic endeavours as member of the Carp expedition to the north-western region in 1951.

5–36.

¹⁶ Silvester, J., Hayes, P. & Hartmann, W. (1998), This ideal conquest. Photography and Colonialism in Namibian history. In Hartmann, W., Silvester, J. & Hayes, P. (1988), *The Colonising Camera. Photographs in the Making of Namibian History*. Cape Town, p. 10. The first photographer to open a studio in the Cape was Jules Leger in the mid 19th cent. (ibid.).

¹⁷ Malmshiemer, L. M. (1987), Photographic Analysis as Ethnohistory: Interpretative Strategies. *Visual Anthropology*, Vol. 1 (1), p. 35.

¹⁸ See Tagg (1988), pp. 60ff; and Sekula, A. (n.d.), The Body and the Archive. In Bolton, R. (ed.), *The Contest of Meaning. Critical Histories of Photography*. n.d., pp. 343–389. Sekula considers the repressive function and use of photography within systems of representation as they develop in the 19th century as fundamental to the idea of photographic realism (p. 352).

¹⁹ Landau, P. (2002), p. 144; Peters & Mergen (1973), p. 280. For both, the use of photography in 19th European identification and criminalization contexts, and the entanglement of the repressive use of the medium in the metropolitan and colonial domain, see: Ginzburg, C. (2002b), *Spurensicherung. Die Wissenschaft auf der Suche nach sich selbst*. Berlin.

²⁰ Landau (2002).

²¹ See Hayes (1998b).

Yet, it was within the ethnographic and anthropometric paradigm, as it developed through the 19th century, where photography was most vigorously employed to fix identities and represent the colonized – generally de-individualized and nameless – within hierarchical systems of human types.²² There are, of course, differences between the actual and the mediated forms of the colonial encounter. In view of a process of mutual influence and considering that the colonization went hand in hand with the visualization of the other²³ – be it human or natural – it remains to ask how and with what effect particular forms of representation were conditioned by historical circumstances. The concern here is, in fact, to understand historical photographs not merely as fragments of the colonizers' constructed vision of African society and environment, but to "read" them within the specific social, economic and political context in which they were produced.²⁴

Visual documentation of explorations, trading and hunting endeavours or missionary activities in Namibia started in the 1860s.²⁵ By the 1890s postcards, photographic collectables and albums became popular assets of both metropolitan consumption of images from the colony as well as within the local settler society, among traders and soldiers based in the territory.²⁶ The significant visual coverage during German colonial time gave proof of the military submission and control of the colony's African population and later its economic, social and moral improvement. As such, photographs could be used for ethnographic documentation, political agitation for the colonial cause or evangelical fund-raising.

German photographic endeavours continued well after the country's defeat in World War I and South Africa's occupation of South West Africa thereafter. It was the new administration's claim to the League of Nations Mandate, attained in 1921, which offered the context to the visualisation of anti-German propaganda on the one hand and the enforce-

²² See also Geary (1988), p.11. Alongside with its repressive use in these particular academic fields in the 19th cent. photography was instrumentalised in a variety of other administrative practices and professionalized scientific discourses, such as psychiatry, urban planning, public health etc. See Tagg (1988), p. 11.

²³ Landau (2002), p. 150. Still an important contribution to the visual perception, representation and mediation of nature and landscape is Mitchell, W.J. T. (1994b), *Landscape and Power*. Chicago.

²⁴ I do refer here to recent debates within historiography raising questions about theoretical paradigms within cultural studies. My interest is not so much in de-constructing a "colonial culture of vision", as we may trace it in the photographs of Heinz Roth, than in relocating these documents within a socio-historical framework. On the debates mentioned see Ferguson, M. & Golding, P. (2003), *Cultural studies in Question*. London; and Roeck, B. (2003), Visual Turn? Kulturgeschichte und die Bilder. *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 29, 2: 294–315.

²⁵ The history of photography in Namibia has for the first time systematically been dealt with in Hartmann et al (1998). I strongly rely on the contributions by various authors published therein.

²⁶ Silvester, Hayes & Hartmann (1998), p. 12. On colonial postcards see e.g. Sturani, E. (2001), *Das Fremde im Bild. Ueberlegungen zur historischen Lektüre kolonialer Postkarten. Fotogeschichte*, 21, Vol. 79, pp. 13ff.

ment of South African legitimacy on the other.²⁷ Common images from the German period, e.g. the construction of land devoid of people, were taken up and put to the service of new requirements, such as the immigration and settlement of “poor whites”.

Photographs constructing and classifying the “native” population in a state of racial and cultural inferiority, fed into the genesis of South African administrative and institutional structures and a perception of the state as the modernising force in its peripheral Namibian colony.²⁸ Beyond the official production of images and knowledge about the African population and the Namibian landscape, the inter-war period saw the beginnings of growing informal photographic activities in the country, be it by overseas safari goers or the local settler society, adventuring into the wilderness of African life and landscapes in the northern reserves beyond the Police Zone.

The photographs of Heinz Roth discussed here are “colonial” in the sense that they were taken by a member of the Namibian settler society in a reserve under colonial rule. This situation created observers and observed, subjects and objects. In a very material sense the situation determined author and ownership and structured the ways in which the images circulated, how they have been used, consumed and archived. A very uneven and de-contextualised state of information results from the trajectories of colonial photographs.²⁹ We may find out who the photographer was, when the images were taken and sometimes in what area, but there is very often limited information on the people in the images, let alone on the photographic situation, which may help to contextualise them. The analytical theme “colonial photographs” does not suggest an instrumentality of these photographs by explaining them as “signature images” of a colonial practice or vision.³⁰ Visual representations from a colonial context – be they photographs or other forms of representation – do emerge from and relate to particular truth regimes, and are shaped by uneven power relations and compulsory forms of knowledge production. But, there is no predictability or inevitability in the dynamics of the relationship between photography and colonialism.³¹ The potential meanings generated through these visual representations remain part of the story to be told.

²⁷ E.g. in the so called “Blue Book”, see United Kingdom (1918), *Report on the Natives of South West Africa and their Treatment by Germany*. Windhoek, London. See also the reprint by Silvester, J. & Gewald, J.-B. (2003), *Words cannot be found. German Colonial Rule in Namibia. An annotated reprint of the 1918 Blue Book*. Leiden, Boston, Tokyo.

²⁸ For a discussion of Namibia’s colonisation in the 20th cent. and its significance for South African nation-building see Hayes et al (1998).

²⁹ See Hayes & Bank (2002), p.7.

³⁰ Edwards (2001), p. 12.

³¹ Hayes, P., Silvester, J. & Hartmann, W. (1998), *Photography, History and Memory*. In Hartmann et al, p. 4.

1.2. Colonial photography in Kaoko³²

There are a limited number of written documents and some scattered photographs on Kaoko produced during the German colonial period.³³ Most images stem from two different contexts: mission activities and expeditions commissioned by the Kaoko Land and Mining Company.³⁴ Bernard Trey of the Rhenish Mission Society seems to have been the first missionary to take photographs in the region from 1911 onwards.³⁵ His tour through Kaoko in 1914, which he did together with missionary Heinrich Vedder,³⁶ resulted in extensive written reports and photographic documentation.³⁷ These early images from Kaoko, showing the Sesfontein congregation, church buildings, and portraits of local evangelists and church elders, underlined the success of missionary work in the region; they served as evidence to legitimize the north-western outpost within the mission society, and to claim future influence in the area in case the colonial government would have opened up the whole of Kaoko to missionary work and other activities.³⁸

³² Just a few publications deal with the history of photography in Kaoko. Bollig, M. (1998c), *Framing Kaokoland*. In Hartmann et al, pp. 164ff. has a focus on history more than on photography; Hayes (2000), pp. 48ff. concentrates on the photographs of C.H.L. Hahn; while Miescher & Rizzo (2000), pp. 10ff. only deal with published photographs.

³³ There are some reports on journeys to Kaoko by military personnel, among them Oberleutnant Franke (1900, 1901), from the mid 1890s onwards. See NAN ZBU 1011 J XIIb5, Band 1&2. Additionally, the military detachment of the northern district based in Outjo reported once a year on developments in Kaoko. See NAN ZBU 147 AVIa3, *Jahresberichte 1895ff.* Unfortunately no photographs could be located among these archivalia up to now.

³⁴ As mentioned in Part I the Kaoko Land und Minengesellschaft bought the territory in 1893 from the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft. See NAN ZBU 2030 WIId25, Band 1, "Nama des Kaokoveldes (Topnaars von Zesfontein). Alte Akten (ab 1893)". The Kolonialgesellschaft had acquired the whole territory – except for Sesfontein and surroundings – in a treaty between the Topnaar leadership and its representative August Lüderitz of 1885. See NAN ZBU 1 AIa2, Band 1, "Verträge mit den Häuptlingen".

³⁵ The reports by missionaries Riechmann and Brockmann in the archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCRN) in Windhoek do not include photographs. See ELCRN VI & VII: CI "Berichte und Beilagen der Missionskonferenzen 1880 bis 1911." and ELCRN VII 27.1–14 "Outjo, Fransfontein, Sesfontein."

³⁶ See Part I, chapter 4.

³⁷ ELCRN VII 27.13 & 27.14, Trey, B., "Bericht über die Reise der Missionare Vedder und Trey ins Kaokofeld. Outjo, 7.12.1914"; and ELCRN C I 1.46 "Heinrich Vedder. an von Zastrow. Gaub, 1.9.1914.". Trey mentions the photographs in his report and a selection of the photographs is reproduced in ELCRN V 27, "Gemeindechronik der Missionsstation Outjo, D.S:W. Afrika, 1904–1967.". The photographs of Vedder were later published partly in Fourie et al (1928).

³⁸ In March 1907 most of Kaoko was declared part of Game Reserve II, with the Etosha pan at its centre. See Köbner & Gerstmeyer (1908), *Die Deutsche Kolonial Gesetzgebung. Sammlung der auf die deutschen Schutzgebiete bezüglichen Gesetze, Verordnungen, Erlasse und internationale Vereinbarungen mit Anmerkungen und Sachregister. 11 Bd., Jg. 1907.* Berlin, therein No. 88, "Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Deutsch Südwestafrika, betreffend die Bildung von Wildreservaten in dem südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebiete. Vom 22. März 1907." It has not been possible to analyse all the photographs of Bernhard Trey, as they are not in the archive of the ELCRN in

The Kaoko Land und Mining Company, which had acquired the rights to the economic exploitation of the region in 1893, commissioned a number of expeditions, mainly led by Georg Hartmann and Julius Kuntz, both of whom published texts and photographs.³⁹ Kuntz and Hartmann's main interest was to depict the landscape. Their photographs may be seen as visual inscription of a "naturalisation of land possession"⁴⁰ and land exploitation, in this particular context mainly in view of future European settlement in the region and of the economic potential of Kaoko as a mining area.⁴¹

In the course of World War I, colonial rule in Namibia was taken over by South Africa and, up to 1921, martial law shaped developments in the country. As we saw, colonial activity and control in Kaoko remained rather marginal up to the mid-1920s.⁴² The South African administration endeavoured to develop the area for administration purposes. The most immediate interest therein had been to limit and control the mobility of people and animals⁴³ and to prevent trade connecting the region to neighbouring areas in Angola to the north, in Owambo to the east and in the Outjo district to the south. In southern Kaoko they relied on German legislation, which had set Sesfontein apart as a Nama reserve in 1906.⁴⁴ The first significant South African visual intervention took place when major Charles Manning made his two expeditions to the region in 1917 and again in 1919⁴⁵ accompanied by voluminous reports. These reports involved numerous photographs on Kaoko's natural features, on strategic places and routes, on local resources such as game, water and minerals,

Windhoek, but in Wuppertal (Germany). A first consideration of those photographs reproduced in the "Gemeindechronik" gives evidence of the potentials of Trey's portraits of local evangelists and church elders as historical documents. In contrast to the colonial and missionary vision they can be interpreted in view of the emergence of a local Christian young male elite in Sesfontein in the beginning 20th century appropriating various media and forms of self-representation, such as the written language, western dress and photography.

³⁹ Hartmann, G. (1902/03), *Meine Expedition 1900 ins nördliche Kaokofeld und 1901 ins Ambo-land. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Zukunftsaufgaben in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. Beiträge zur Kolonialpolitik und Kolonialwirtschaft*: 399–430; and Kuntz (1912), p. 206. See Part II, chapter 2 above.

⁴⁰ Landau quoted in Hayes et al (1998), p. 14.

⁴¹ Miescher & Rizzo (2000).

⁴² The South Africans had stationed police men at two places in southern Kaoko, i.e. in Kauas Okava, see NAN LAN 644 1640 and NAN OCT 17 ZI, and at Kamanjab, see NAN SWAA 941 – A. 82/47.

⁴³ See Silvester (1998), p. 96, where the author describes similar a administrative policy for the southern reserves.

⁴⁴ According to *Government Notice 122 of 1923*. The South African administration confirmed the German Ordinance of March 1906 and defined Sesfontein reserve as an area of 10 km radius from the waterhole. See N.J. van Warmelo (1952), p. 37.

⁴⁵ NAN ADM 156 W32 "Report on Kaokoveld by Major C. Manning, 15.11.1917, and NAN SWAA 2516 "Report by Major C.N. Manning re Second Tour Kaokoveld; Disarmament; General.", 25.8.1919.

on European presence and illegal hunting,⁴⁶ on arms and potential political resistance and, not least, on the history and society of the various “tribes”.⁴⁷

Later, when northern Kaoko was divided into three reserves in 1923,⁴⁸ the focus shifted and the identification of leaders, their claim to the control of people and land and their involvement in the colonial administration shaped the visual narrative on Kaoko.⁴⁹ Vita Tom most successfully occupied the visual field, featuring prominently as a strong man with access to the main insignia of political and social status: numerous followers, arms, horses, cattle and women. As we saw, he had managed to establish himself as the main political figure in the region and to attain a privileged status vis-à-vis his immediate rivals, resulting in the recognition of Vita Tom by the administration as the only chief in the area.⁵⁰

The 1930s saw a tiny but continuous photographic production on Kaoko, which may be labelled as the visual representation of indirect rule, based on two strongly gendered narrative pillars: nature and natives.⁵¹ Individual men, represented as “traditional” leaders and the political authorities the administration relied on, were visually juxtaposed with groups of anonymous women, signifying pre-modern cultural life in the northern areas.⁵² Landscape photography naturalized the spatial structure of the territory and visually inscribed the reserve as an absent presence, as a natural feature of Kaoko enabling colonial rule without undermining African “virgin” nature and culture. Paralleling this official narrative in the 1930s a further genre gradually emerged within the visual appropriation of Kaoko, the

⁴⁶ See NAN ADM 139 C74 on “Illicit trading of Portuguese subjects” in Kaoko, referring to Portuguese traders bartering alcohol for stock; and NAN A 450 Manning to secretary of South West Africa, 4.10.1921.

⁴⁷ As shown in Part II the main issue preoccupying the South African military administration in its early years and the few settlers in the north-western area were rumours of armed conflicts in Kaoko and their potential threat for colonial rule. Such fears were by far limited to Kaoko and they not least reflected the unsteadiness of colonial rule and control in this period. See Hayes et al (1998).

⁴⁸ See Part II, chapter 4.

⁴⁹ In 1925 the Denver African expedition made a short trip to Kaoko on their way to the Etosha region. The expedition photographer took some images in Kaoko Otavi, some of which have been published by Robert Gordon. I have not been able to analyse these photographs scattered in a number of archives. See Gordon, R. J. (1997), *Picturing Bushmen. The Denver African expedition of 1925*. Athens, chapter 3.

⁵⁰ See e.g. NAN SWAA 2516, “Major Eadie to the secretary of the protectorate”, 20.3.1919; NAN NAO 28, “NC Ovamboland to NC Windhoek”, 3.5.1928.

⁵¹ An important publication including photographs in the 1930s are the annual reports of the South African administration to the League of Nations. Many of the photographs on Kaoko were taken by the NC of Owambo and Kaoko, C.L.H. Hahn and emerged in a context of the administration representing itself with a strong sense for audience, both within southern Africa and internationally. See Union of South Africa (1921), *Annual Report on South West Africa to the League of Nations*. Pretoria; also Miescher & Rizzo (2000), pp. 24ff.

⁵² Hayes (1998b), p. 178.

photo-safari.⁵³ It was mainly made up of privileged members of the Southern African settler societies, usually men and seldom women, adventuring on hunting and leisure tours to the area.⁵⁴ The parallel itinerary of guns and cameras mentioned above came strongly into play here,⁵⁵ and both wild life and hunting trophies prominently entered the visual field, evoking visions of colonial and settler masculinities.⁵⁶

The visual construction of Kaoko as a harmonious space of natural and cultural unfolding and as a consumption asset for a self-asserting, masculine settler society strongly contrasted developments in the region during the late inter-war period. The South African administration hindered economic activities, widely dependent on the mobility of stock and people, on access to game and other natural resources, and on trade with tobacco, vegetables and animal products.⁵⁷ As we saw, the 1930s were characterized by the creation of further neutral or buffer zones, now on the northern and eastern borders of Kaoko, preventing people and cattle from reaching cattle posts and grazing areas and isolating the region from its main trading partners in Angola and Owambo.⁵⁸ The legislation of 1928 had furthermore enabled the colonial administration to claim the exploitation of game resources in the region and to prosecute “illegal” hunting by local residents.⁵⁹ Tightened legislation and increased

⁵³ See e.g. Nink, F. (1930), Auf Wildfährten im Kaokoveld. *Meinerts Monatsmagazin*, No. 6: 259–274. The accessibility of Kaoko for settlers and “white” travellers was restricted as it meant “leaving the Police Zone”; see Miescher, G. & Rizzo, L. (1998), *Body and Space. Continuities and Discontinuities in the Construction of Kaoko and its inhabitants*. unpublished manuscript, p. 9.

⁵⁴ There is not much research on the social history of travel in Namibia, nor for Kaoko in particular. For a discussion of adventure travels by German-speaking settlers to north-western Namibia see Henrichsen (2000), p. 159ff.

⁵⁵ Motorized hunting and photographic trips or safaris emerged as a settler activity in East Africa during the 1930s; in Namibia the 1950s saw a popularisation of this kind of specific travel culture, see Henrichsen (2000), p. 164.

⁵⁶ Hayes (1998b), pp. 173 & 174; Hartmann, W. (1998b), Performing gender, staging colonialism: camping it up/acting it out in Ovamboland. In Hartmann et al, (1998), p. 156ff. Unfortunately Hartmann doesn’t unfold the entanglement of colonial masculinity – and homosexual eroticism – with wildlife and hunting trophy, even though the photographs he discusses would be very suggestive in this context.

⁵⁷ For trade with animal products in the early 1930s to the south see NAN NAO 18, annual report 1930 of the NC of Ovamboland, n.d.; NAN NAO 28, NC Ovamboland to secretary, 26.9.1930. For trade of animals for mealies and cash for heifers in southern Angola see NAN NAO 28, du Buisson to NC Ovamboland, 3.11.1930 and NC Ovamboland to secretary, 24.6.1932; on general trading activities in Kaoko see NAN NAO 30 NC Ovamboland to secretary, 15.11.1941; on trading with tobacco see e.g. NAN SWAA 1187, Sgt. Krogh “report on Zessfontein native reserve”, 7.8.1936.

⁵⁸ See Part V.

⁵⁹ Protection of game and the regulation of hunting in Kaoko had been an issue from the beginning of South African rule. It was dealt with in the reports by Major Manning and was one of the reasons for the police patrols into the area in the 1920s. The inclusion of Kaoko into Game Reserve 2 laid the ground for a comprehensive legislation on which future prosecution would be based.

administrative and police intervention in Kaoko was part of a broader process of determining economic, social and political life in the north-western area and of trying to implement colonial state control and rule.⁶⁰ It initiated processes of social erosion and impoverishment, which most dramatically erupted during the drought period in the early 1930s.⁶¹ By 1935 it became evident that increased colonial presence in the region would eventually lead to the disempowerment and gradual removal of the old political elite, among them Vita Tom. The creation of an independent Kaoko district with its own administration centre, Opuwo, in 1939⁶² and the declaration of an independent Kaoko native reserve immediately after World War II⁶³ formally underlined this shift in administrative policy.

2. Central Kaoko in the late 1940s and early 1950s

The period during and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War in colonial Namibia has been given relatively little attention, and if so, it has been addressed through a selection of specific issues and subjects.⁶⁴ Scholarly work concerned with the political history of the colony has addressed South Africa's attempt to incorporate the Namibian territory as a fifth province after 1945,⁶⁵ and various authors have stressed the significance of the incorporation debates for the reconstitution of anti-colonial resistance and the emergence of nationalist movements inside the country.⁶⁶ Attention has also been given to the repercussions of the National Party's coming to power in 1948 in South Africa and two years later in Namibia itself, marking the formal beginning of apartheid in the region.⁶⁷

In contrast, the historiography of the northern territories has very much been determined by the implications of the systematic enforcement of migrant labour in Owambo,

⁶⁰ As argued before, the consolidation of the colonial state in the northern areas in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s was an uneven and heterogeneous process and depended on the ways colonialism was negotiated between the regions' population and the colonial authorities on the ground. For a comparative perspective see Hayes et al, p. 22.

⁶¹ Droughts and famines in the 1930s were not exceptional for Kaoko but affected the northern areas as a whole. See Hayes (1998a), pp. 117ff. and Bollig (1997), both authors discussing oral traditions on these drought periods.

⁶² *Proclamation No. 10 of 1939*. See Part V.

⁶³ *Government Notice No. 374 of 1947*.

⁶⁴ Miescher (2009), p. 265. Generally recent Namibian historiography has laid its focus on the interwar period, with some authors including the years of the Second World War. See Hayes et al (1998), particularly the introduction.

⁶⁵ See Goldblatt (1971), pp. 243–255.

⁶⁶ Ngavirue, Z. (1997), *Political Parties and Interest Groups in South West Africa (Namibia): A Study of a Plural Society*. Basel.

⁶⁷ Du Pisani, A. (1986), *SWA/Namibia: the Politics of Continuity and Change*. Johannesburg.

such as the fundamental socio-economic transformations it entailed.⁶⁸ As Giorgio Miescher has rightfully remarked, a social and economic history of the Second World War and of the years between 1945 and 1948 in Namibia continues to deserve study, both with regard to the areas within and beyond the Police Zone.⁶⁹ This is particularly true for the north-western part of the colony, and Kaoko's marginalization in terms of scholarly attention and of socio-economic importance for the South African administration almost seems to intensify. We might argue that this negligence was linked to the fact that the region continued to remain insignificant for labour recruitment, for missionary expansion and for agricultural and mineral exploitation and, indeed, the discrepancy between low revenues for the colonial government and the potential high costs of administration caused in the north-western region remained a dilemma faced by the South African government. Furthermore, political mobilization and participation in anti-colonial and nationalist politics appear to have been rather limited and localized.⁷⁰ Yet, as we shall see, the mid and late 1940s were quite important, as these years saw the renegotiation of Kaoko's status in Namibia's post-war setting. The process eventually led to the deliberate cementation of economic marginalization and isolation contributing to the reconstitution and stigmatization of the region as a space and object of peculiar symbolic value, to the settler societies in Namibia and in South Africa. Therein visibility, i.e. the visual appropriation and representation of Kaoko and its inhabitants, became crucial.

2.1. Nuancing colonial spatiality and indirect rule in Kaoko

The annual reports by the officer in charge of native affairs in Opuwo provide a telling image of the official narrative of the South African administration on Kaoko and its inhabitants after the Second World War. The reports appear highly formalized and standardized, and were obviously influenced by an implicit list of issues and themes to be addressed rather than by a deep knowledge and understanding of the region's socio-economy and political landscape on the part of the colonial officer stationed there. In late 1946, for example, the report began by naming the numerous headmen and councillors and assessing

⁶⁸ See e.g. Moorsom, R. (1977), Underdevelopment, contract labour and worker consciousness in Namibia, 1915–1972. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 4, 1: 3–49; Emmett (1999), pp. 169ff.

⁶⁹ Miescher (2009), pp. 265–66.

⁷⁰ There is no scholarly work on nationalist and anti-colonial organization in Kaoko after 1945. We have to remain cautious as the archival documents produced by the South African administration strategically downplay any form of political mobilization in the region in the 1940s. Some interviewees have vaguely referred to contacts between some of the Herero leaders such as Thomas Mutate with nationalist politicians in central Namibia. Interview with Uetjipuraiije Hiatjivi, On-jette/Kaoko Otavi, 7.5.2002, interview with David Humu, Kaoko Otavi, 12.1.2002.

the ways in which they had performed throughout the year reported on.⁷¹ All in all, the administration seemed satisfied with the general situation in the north-west, although the tension between influential and reliable Herero members of the headmen council and allegedly “unreliable” and “incompetent” Ovahimba and Ovatjimba representatives of “weak character” was almost incessantly reproduced. Still, the local colonial authorities assured the government in Windhoek of Kaoko’s inhabitants’ unbroken loyalty towards the administration. The region’s pastoral economy was described as rich, as all groups residing in the area were said to own huge herds of large and small stock. Apparently the region’s pastoralists continued to do rather well against all odds, and the enduring scarcity of rainfall had merely led to cattle, sheep and goats being in a comparatively poor condition. Losses in animals were explained less in terms of colonial restrictions and ecological shortages than as a result of the natural rivalry between stock and carnivores populating the region. Still, by the end of the dry season of 1946 the region faced a severe shortage of food and the administration was forced to supply the headmen with food relief, i.e. mealie meal to be distributed among the headmen’s subjects. The officer in charge did show some sympathy and comprehension for people’s hardship, as he acknowledged that the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in neighbouring Ombalantu and consequently the declaration of Kaoko as a quarantine area had created some stress and disturbance to the economic development in the region. Indeed, in order to prevent the spread of the disease throughout the north-west, and eventually to the Police Zone, all trade between Kaoko and Owambo had been prohibited. The sanction affected the barter of mahangu, clothes and other commodities traded in from the east and exchanged for tobacco in central and northern Kaoko, and it undermined the brisk trade in donkeys, tobacco and grain between the Sesfontein and the Kamanjab area in southern Kaoko. The closure of borders for trade cut off the region’s communities from exchange networks, which aggravated and deteriorated the living conditions within the reserves. As a matter of fact the 1946 situation inside Kaoko still corresponded to the spatial order set out in the 1920s and in theory people were forced to live inside the Sesfontein and the three tiny reserves in northern Kaoko. It remained likewise unchanged that the majority of the region’s inhabitants *de facto* stayed on crown land. According to the census, Oorlog’s, Katiti’s and Kakurukouje’s reserves, and the southern Sesfontein “Hottentot” enclave⁷² had to host a population of 6010 men, women and children with herds of small and large stock

⁷¹ NAN NAO 061 12/3, Reports Kaokoveld, 1946–55, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho to Chief NC Windhoek, Annual report 1946, 23.12.1946.

⁷² Symptomatically, the South African colonial reports kept the terminology originally used for the reserves inside Kaoko and the names of the chiefs and headmen they had been assigned to in the early 1920s up to the late 1940s, when the spatial order changed once again as we shall see.

comprising 96'000 animals and donkeys numbering in excess of 2000 head.⁷³ Eventually, the officer in charge closed his report on the north-western communities in a general paragraph on the social and material conditions, which was reproduced literally up to the late 1950s, evidencing the repetitive and standardized discursive bias of colonial administration and perception:

The majority of the Hereros, although they still adhere to their tribal law and customs, have to a certain extent given up their old way of living. Their domed mud huts are a thing of the past and they now live in substantial rectangular huts built on European lines and, as a rule, of a much better and neater appearance than those of the Hereros living in the Police Zone. They do not confine themselves entirely to stock breeding but also have gardens and fields in which they grow mealies, wheat and tobacco etc. If it was not for the damage done to their crops by elephants, an even greater interest would be shown in agriculture. The Hereros, and to a lesser extent the Ovattjimbass, have taken to European clothes and like to be well dressed. The Ovattimbass still dress in their old traditional manner. (...) The Ovattimbass live in lightly constructed huts made of branches and leaves and they often do not even take trouble to plaster these with mud. They are nomads in the true sense and are always on the move with their families, trekking from one locality to the other in search of good pastures for their stock, the accumulation of which is their main object in life.// The Hottentots, like the Hereros, adapt a more or less European standard of living. They are also stock owners but at the same time have large fields and wheat, mealies, and tobacco are largely cultivated at Zessfontein.⁷⁴

The political landscape of Kaoko, and the imposition of its manifestation in a tribal idiom to be ensured through the headmen council system became one of the tropes of colonial narratives on Kaoko, both written and visual. The more so, as by the late 1940s the spatial pattern in the region, i.e. the distinction between the internal reserves and crown land could no longer be upheld. As will be shown, abandoning the spatial separation of the alleged distinct groups, regardless of their actual entrenchment, would necessitate an increased discursive inscription of difference.

2.1.1. Kaokoveld Native Reserve and the clearing of the stock-free zone

In November 1947, the administration at last abandoned the concept of the four reserves inside Kaoko and merged these into a single native reserve, which included a large portion

⁷³ NAN NAO 061 12/3, Reports Kaokoveld, 1946–55, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho to Chief NC Windhoek, Annual report 1946, 23.12.1946.

⁷⁴ NAN NAO 061 12/3, Reports Kaokoveld, 1946–55, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho to Chief NC Windhoek, Annual report 1946, 23.12.1946. Note the reference to the European style of house building in the quote. As we shall see, this aspect of transforming local architecture will be completely suppressed in the visual representation of the region.

of the Kaoko district.⁷⁵ By doing so, the colonial government had accepted the realities of the situation, as throughout the 1930s and 1940s the majority of Kaoko's inhabitants had settled and reared their livestock beyond the inner reserves on crown land.⁷⁶ According to the logic of the colonial perception of the north-western territory, the declaration of a contiguous native reserve in Kaoko ironically enhanced the problematic situation in those parts of the district, which fell outside of the reserve, i.e. southern Kaoko and the stock-free zone. Indeed, the area between Sesfontein and the Grootberg and along the Huab and Hoanib Rivers remained inhabited and perennially used by African stockowners, which seemingly extended the radius and direction of their mobile herds towards the Kamanjab area and into the northern outskirts of the Outjo district. Unsurprisingly, these movements aroused negative responses from their immediate rivals, the European and Boer farmers,⁷⁷ and eventually involved various colonial authorities, not least the veterinarian department, still fearing the spilling over of stock diseases into the Police Zone.

The issue of removing the communities living along the rivers in southern Kaoko had cropped up in the late 1930s, when rumours about stock theft and assaults on farmers in the Outjo district had reached the South African police in Franzfontein.⁷⁸ The colonial authorities were very much aware of the fact that bringing these unsettled communities, who "wandered about as they liked", under control was decisive for the long-term security of their border policies in the north-west.⁷⁹ In accordance with the general handling of such issues, a police patrol was sent out to assess the numbers of people and stock in order to make suggestions for an eventual removal and resettlement inside a reserve yet to be selected.⁸⁰ Franzfontein and Okombahe reserve, both inside the Outjo district, were selected. The veterinarians had, in principal, agreed to move those communities and their stock, as they saw

⁷⁵ NAN NAO 061 12/3, Reports Kaokoveld, 1946–55, OC Native Affairs, Wessels, to CNC Windhoek, Ohopoho, 20.12.1948. The reserve was formally declared in *Government Notice* 374 of 1947.

⁷⁶ The archival material does not allow for an interpretation, which would classify the declaration of the Kaoko native reserve in Kaoko as a result of the increased international pressure on the South African administration to improve the living conditions of Africans in the colony. See generally on this point Miescher (2009), p. 278.

⁷⁷ NAN SWAA 2265 A 502/43, Vol. 1, removal of livestock from/to Kaokoveld, 1935–51, Senior Welfare Officer to CNC, Windhoek, 22.10.1949 and Director of Agriculture to CNC, Windhoek, 3.12.1949..

⁷⁸ NAN SWAA 1169 A 158/40/3, Native Reserves. Natives and Stock in Southern Kaokoveld opposite Franzfontein reserve, 1932–51, South African Police Franzfontein to Police Omaruru, re assault complaint, Franzfontein, 12.6.1939.

⁷⁹ NAN SWAA 1169 A 158/40/3, Native Reserves. Natives and Stock in Southern Kaokoveld opposite Franzfontein reserve, 1932–51, South African Police to CNC Windhoek, 30.6.1939.

⁸⁰ NAN SWAA 1169 A 158/40/3, Native Reserves. Natives and Stock in Southern Kaokoveld opposite Franzfontein reserve, 1932–51, Police Franzfontein, Report on patrol in southern Kaokoveld from Franzfontein, Franzfontein, 19.12.1939.

no danger in terms of disease management; however, the central authorities in Windhoek faced unexpected resistance to their plans. In fact, the native commissioner and the welfare officer in Omaruru both raised concerns that neither the Okombahe, nor the Franzfontein reserves contained the land and water resources required to accept the comparatively high number of people and animals, not least as both reserves already showed signs of overstrained ecological resources.⁸¹ Plans and debates came to an unintentional halt due to the war situation,⁸² but immediately after 1945 the southern Kaokoveld problem was attended to anew. In early July 1946, the administrator sketched out the general policy regarding the removal of Africans, reserve extensions and the handling of areas in which the rivalries between European settlement and African residence was of particular sensitivity.⁸³ Generally speaking, the central government prioritized the interests of the commercial farmers in the Outjo district, being rather indulgent when they entered southern Kaoko with their herds temporarily and, in 1947, the administration even allowed the farmers to access emergency grazing grounds, all of which were situated inside the Kaoko district.⁸⁴ Since the early 1940s the police had regularly patrolled the areas along the Ugab River and those between Kamajab and Okaukuejo on the western border of Etosha and had harassed African pastoralists – by arresting people, confiscating stock or simply shooting animals.⁸⁵ Still, the situation required a long-term solution and throughout 1949 the Okombahe and Franzfontein reserves were extended in order to accommodate the communities from southern Kaoko, which were to be removed. In late August 1950, the chief native commissioner in Windhoek concluded that 600 people with herds of 400 head of large stock and 700 head of small stock had been moved out of southern Kaoko into the new reserves and that, as a consequence, the north-western portion of the stock-free zone could hence be considered a cleared zone.⁸⁶

⁸¹ NAN SWAA 1169 A 158/40/3, Native Reserves. Natives and Stock in Southern Kaokoveld opposite Franzfontein reserve, 1932–51, Police Franzfontein to Magistrate Outjo, 27.12.1939 and NC Omaruru, (Okombahe reserve) to CNC Windhoek, 26.1.1940.

⁸² NAN SWAA 1169 A 158/40/3, Native Reserves. Natives and Stock in Southern Kaokoveld opposite Franzfontein reserve, 1932–51, CNC to Police Windhoek, 14.1.1942.

⁸³ NAN SWAA 1169 A 158/40/3, Native Reserves. Natives and Stock in Southern Kaokoveld opposite Franzfontein reserve, 1932–51, Administrator to the Assistant Secretary and CNC, 4.7.1946. On the general tension after the Second World War between settler land claims and African enhancement in colonial Namibia see Miescher (2009), pp. 278–279.

⁸⁴ Miescher (2009), p. 287.

⁸⁵ Miescher (2009), p. 292.

⁸⁶ NAN SWAA 1169 A 158/40/3, Native Reserves. Natives and Stock in Southern Kaokoveld opposite Franzfontein reserve, 1932–51, CNC Windhoek to magistrate and NC Omaruru, 29.8.1950.

2.1.2. *The headmen council and the narratives of tribalism*

The constitution and declaration of the Kaokoveld native reserve in late 1947 can be interpreted as the formal retracing of a *de facto* situation on the ground. In terms of colonial discourse and administrative logic, it has been argued that the annihilation of the former four reserves and splitting up the region's inhabitants into distinct groups necessarily led to a reconfiguration of the tribal setting, which was conceived of as a precondition for successful rule in the north-west. Indeed, the late 1940s saw a shift from territorial to institutional colonialism and indirect rule and hence from territorial to institutionalized segregation. Strengthening the narratives of tribalism became the key requirement of the headmen council, yet now, the administration had to reconsider its handling of their political counterparts in the reserve. Friedman has rightfully argued that the colonial authorities' policy in Kaoko remained riddled by ambiguity when it came to the appointment and support of candidates to the headmen council in the 1940s.⁸⁷ The incoherence of colonial intervention in the region and the government's notorious discontent with the performance of headmen had directed administrative debates in Kaoko throughout the 1920s and 1930s as much as it had remained an unsettled issue after World War II. The susceptibility of the system was now conceived of and addressed as a problem, which needed the government's full attention. The main challenge faced remained the fact that, while the officers of native administration based in the northern territories persistently celebrated the loyalty of Kaoko's political leaders and the successful work of the council in southern and central Kaoko, the headmen representing the communities in the northern and north-western parts of the region seemingly refused to collaborate and attracted attention by being absent from the regular "tribal meetings" held under the aegis of the officer in charge in Opuwo.⁸⁸ Indeed, in early November 1949 the chief native commissioner solicitously noted that in his eyes, the headman council of Kaoko had apparently created two political spheres: central and southern Kaoko appeared to be closely involved in indirect rule, while northern Kaoko constantly threatened to fall out of the administration's grasp and sphere of influence.⁸⁹ Hence, colonial interest shifted and the former ambiguity towards the headmen and the power they should embody and apply was purposefully transformed into an intransigent strategy of political consolidation. The administration now aimed at coherence between the headmen council as the key institution of indirect rule and its anchorage in a stable territoriality, i.e. the new native reserve. The old territorial segregation inside Kaoko expressed by the four internal

⁸⁷ Friedman (2005), pp. 29–30.

⁸⁸ NAN NAO 051, Tribal Affairs Kaokoveld, 1948–55, Chief Native Commissioner to NC Ovambo-land, Windhoek, 22.11.1949.

⁸⁹ NAN NAO 051, Kaokoveld Tribal Affairs, 1948–55, Chief Native Commissioner to NC Ondangua, Windhoek, 9.11.1949.

reserves, regardless of its blurred and fractured nature maintained throughout the decades of South African rule, was now replaced by an institutionalized segregation epitomised by the members of the headmen council, all of whom were now fully backed and supported, unless serious offences required their removal. From the late 1940s onwards, and increasingly so since 1952,⁹⁰ colonial perception, policy and intervention would be profoundly determined by the segregation narrative of Kaoko's inhabitants into four groups – Nama in Sesfontein, Herero in central Kaoko and Ovahimba and Ovatjimba in the northern and north-western parts of the region.⁹¹ As will be shown below, the discursive inscription of a tribal bias, through which any future development in the region would necessarily have to be read and interpreted, significantly relied on visual representation. Indeed, colonial photography became an arena for both colonial narratives of segregation and for the male elite, which occupied the visual field in terms of their claim to political status and representation in the regional bodies of the colonial state.

2.2. Economic isolation and contested trade

Besides the shading of colonial space and the imposition of a tribal political system, there was a third ingredient to the constitution of Kaoko as a marginal region prone to symbolic appropriation and distortion in the post-war period, namely the region's exclusion from the colonial economy, i.e. migrant labour and trade. In 1946 reporting on Kaoko became systematic again and the officer in charge's annual report in late December of that year drew a general picture of the situation in the north-western area in the immediate post-war period:

There are no trading stores in the Kaokoveld and formerly the natives had to trek down to Kamanjab or other stores in the Outjo district, if they desired to purchase supplies. This has of course become impossible since their taking donkeys into the Police Zone was prohibited in August. This was done as a precautionary measure to stop the spread of Foot and Mouth disease, an outbreak of which occurred in Ovamboland. // The export of wheat and tobacco from Zessfontein to Kamanjab etc. was also stopped and even the trading with Ovambos ceased. The result is that at present all the Kaokoveld natives have no means or source from which they can purchase

⁹⁰ Friedman (2005), pp. 30ff. In 1952 and 1953 several Ovatjimba headmen formally joined the headmen council.

⁹¹ The administration tended to treat Sesfontein and the rest of Kaoko separately, and archival materials reproduce this bias to some extent. Indeed, the OC of Native Affairs in Kaoko held the tribal meetings in Sesfontein and Opuwo separately. My analysis undermines this division and frames the general problem of the headman council and indirect rule in Kaoko beyond this division. Interviewees in Sesfontein e.g. stressed that headmen in Kaoko, who were part of the council, kept close contact among one another and disregarded the administration's perception of Sesfontein as a separate reserve. Interview with August Kasaona, Onjette/Sesfontein, 20.1.2002 and interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Onjette/Sesfontein, 27.12.2001.

supplies, a hardship which is severely felt, more so by the Zessfontein natives than those in other parts of the Kaokoveld.⁹²

Significantly, the native affairs officer forbore from referring to an issue, which had cropped up repeatedly since November 1945 and concerned various applications for a hawkers licence to be granted to European and Boer traders based in the Outjo district for Kaoko.⁹³ Apparently, African livestock-owners in the region increasingly lobbied for access to the stock market inside the Police Zone and were eager to sell slaughtered animals to their southern trade partners.⁹⁴ Although the native commissioner in Ondangwa confirmed that there was a surplus of cattle in Kaoko, he backed the negative assessment of the veterinary department. Namely the threat of animal diseases, lungsickness and Foot and Mouth disease in particular entering the Police Zone made any trade with stock from Kaoko unthinkable.⁹⁵ Contrary to the colonial government's unbending policy, individual African and European traders continued to apply for trading licences for Kaoko throughout the following two years, hoping to formalize – we might also suggest legalizing – the exchange of sugar, coffee, cloth and other commodities for small stock, tobacco and “buchu” (a herbal perfume).⁹⁶ All initiatives were turned down, but the administration took up the idea of regularly sending a trader to the region, whereas the colonial authorities adhered to the concern that allowing private businessmen, Africans and Europeans alike, to enter Kaoko would open the ways for all sorts of activities beyond state control. The Windhoek authorities therefore decided to allot the trading licence to SWANLA,⁹⁷ which monopolized labour recruitment in the northern territories and controlled trade in imported commodities.⁹⁸ Only in 1950 did SWANLA send a trader to Opuwo and Sesfontein for the first time and the revenues remained more than disappointing – a failure SWANLA explained by the lack of cash in the

⁹² NAN NAO 61, Reports Kaokoveld 1946–55, OC Native Affairs Ohopuho, to CNC Windhoek, Kaokoveld Annual Report: 1946, 23.12.1946.

⁹³ The application by H.F. Versfeld, a transport driver doing business in the northern territories in 1940 was temporarily approved, while F.G. Cogill's application in 1945 was immediately turned down. See NAN SWAA 1060 A 135/46, Trading Kaokoveld, 1938–52, CNC Windhoek to the South African Police, 19.8.1940 and Secretary to Magistrate Outjo, Windhoek, 16.11.1945.

⁹⁴ NAN SWAA 1060 A 135/46, Trading Kaokoveld, 1938–52, H.C. du Preez to the Secretary for South West Africa, 22.11.1946.

⁹⁵ NAN SWAA 1060 A 135/46, Trading Kaokoveld, 1938–52, Watt to the Secretary for South West Africa, 12.12.1946 & NC Ovamboland to the Director of Agriculture, Ondangua, 7.1.1947.

⁹⁶ NAN SWAA 1060 A 135/46, Trading Kaokoveld, 1938–52, e.g. application by G.W.J. Scholtz, in Scholtz to the Secretary for SWA, 11.1.1947, or the application by Simon Kaatendekua, in Kaatendekua to the Additional Native Commissioner, Windhoek, 4.6.1948.

⁹⁷ South West African Native Labour Association.

⁹⁸ NAN NAO 064 17/4, Trading in Kaokoveld, 1948–54, Native Commissioner Ovamboland to the OC native affairs Ohopuho, Ondangua, 23.2.1948.

north-western region.⁹⁹ The next few years were determined by the administration showing regular discontent with SWANLA's disappointing performance in Kaoko, both with regard to labour recruitment and trade.¹⁰⁰ In economic terms giving out licences to private traders would have been far more viable both for suppliers and buyers, but the central government insisted on SWANLA's privilege and continued to deny licences applied for by individual businessmen.¹⁰¹ While the official legitimization for this was the colonial government's duty to protect Africans in the reserves against proliferating interests of private entrepreneurs,¹⁰² it was most of all the administration's anxiety of losing control over economic activities between private business people inside the Police Zone and those in the northern territories, which lay concealed behind their policy.¹⁰³ The repercussions this policy had on minimizing trade inside the reserve was repeatedly raised as an issue by the local political elite, most prominently during a meeting held in Opuwo on the occasion of the native commissioner from Ondangua touring the reserve in autumn 1949:¹⁰⁴

We have difficulty. We cry. We are imprisoned. We do not know why we are locked up. We are in gaol. We have no place to live. This is our difficulty which we report to our Master, Nakale. Here our living is our cattle, sheep, goats, tobacco, buchu. Our donkey wagons do not fetch anything from Kamanjab. We cannot get meat from the south or even mealiemeal. Our sleeping skins cannot be sent out. (...) We enter the Police Zone with hunger. We have no money. Our food is taken away. We go on our way with hunger. Ovamboland is closed to us. We lived on Ovamboland for a long time. We want to take our cattle there, also our sheep and goats. Here in the Kaokoveld we live only on our livestock. The borders are closed. The borders press us heavily.¹⁰⁵

As we shall see, the socio-economic isolation and marginalization, which was so strongly reported from the meeting in late 1949, was linked to Kaoko's emergence as a specific symbolic space, the visual representation of which became a popular consumption asset in post-war colonial Namibia.

⁹⁹ NAN SWAA 1060 A 135/46, Trading Kaokoveld, 1938–52, C.J. Badenhorst, Manager SWANLA Ondonga store, to Native Commissioner Ovamboland, Ondangua, 11.4.1950.

¹⁰⁰ See Bollig (1998b), pp. 522ff.

¹⁰¹ NAN SWAA 1060 A 135/46, Trading Kaokoveld, 1938–53, e.g. Chief NC to NC Ovamboland, Windhoek, 14.2.1951, relating to the case of a trader named Maritz, who applied for opening a store in Sesfontein.

¹⁰² NAN SWAA 1060 A 135/46, Trading Kaokoveld, Acting Secretary to the Administrator, Windhoek, 19.4.1951.

¹⁰³ NAN SWAA 1060 A 135/46, Trading Kaokoveld, Magistrate Outjo to the Chief NC, Outjo, 10.6.1948.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Bollig has used quotes from the report repeatedly, e.g. in Bollig (1998b), p. 506.

¹⁰⁵ NAN SWAA 2513, Kaokoveld quarterly and monthly reports, 1938–52, NC Ovamboland to Chief NC Windhoek, Inspection report Kaokoveld native reserve: September–October, 1949, Ondangua, 10.10.1949. Nakale was the NC's nickname.

3. The photographs of Heinz Roth



Figure 1: Carp expedition members

Heinz Roth belonged to a tradition of amateur photographers in the German-speaking settler society, professionalizing their photography in the context of scientific journeys and safari trips throughout colonial Namibia from the mid-1930s onwards. The importance of Kaoko as a destination for such travelling gradually increased in the decades following World War II. In contrast to neighbouring Owambo, where most Africans lived, the north-western part of Namibia, with a much smaller population, had – as we repeatedly saw – neither been a serious target of labour recruitment nor of missionary expansion. Migrations out of and into Kaoko, as well as trade with neighbours had been increasingly difficult, and control was reinforced in 1946 when Foot and Mouth disease broke out in the north. Economic activity beyond ensuring subsistence was limited to the reserve, except for small-scale trade to southern Angola and eastern Owambo.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ NAN SWAA 1168, Native Reserve Kaokoveld, Vol. 3 and NAN NAO 61 12/3, Reports Kaokoveld, 1946–55.

The expedition led by Bernard Carp entered a region which, viewed from a colonial perspective, increasingly played the role of a “frontier-zone”, where African life allegedly developed beyond the great narratives of modernization and the colonial economy. The perception of Kaoko as “Africa untamed” resulted in a popularization of the region as a consumption asset of the settler elite, inflected by the sheer unattainable privilege to overcome administrative restrictions to “white” access to the area. Carp himself was denied permission to enter Kaoko on several occasions¹⁰⁷ and it was only owing to the intervention of members of the settler community in Namibia that his project was eventually recognized.¹⁰⁸ The administration’s reluctance to open the way was rooted, amongst other concerns, in a distrust of the motivations and aims of groups of “white” urban-based civilians to enter the reserved areas in the north. All the more as the expedition, as planned by Bernard Carp, was at the same time a scientific, commercial and leisure enterprise.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, by the 1920s this *jumelage* of hunting, commerce and science had spread significantly in Southern Africa¹¹⁰ and its photographic documentation acquired economic viability through increasing importance in expanding institutionalized visual consumption. Carp’s concern to have proper and extended visual recordings of the expedition’s activities in Kaoko and to entrust Roth as photographer and filmmaker¹¹¹ was not least linked to the fact that it was museums sponsoring the expedition and providing, as we shall see, a future market for the visuals – of people and of wildlife.

3.1. Notes on the social biographies of the photographs of Heinz Roth

The involvement of Southern African museums as funding institutions of Carp’s expedition to Kaoko was of particular relevance for what Elizabeth Edwards has called the social biographies of photographs, stressing the use, circulation and archiving of images for the ways in which they become meaningful.¹¹² In the planning phase of the Kaoko tour, conflicts regarding the accessibility of the expedition’s material output emerged, as Roth and other Namibian-based participants stressed the need to prevent an exclusive South African

¹⁰⁷ See e.g. NAN A 340, Bernard Carp to Heinz Roth, 30.1.1950 and 14.3.1950,

¹⁰⁸ Mainly Heinz Roth himself, Eberhard von Koenen and a representative of the Windhoek Museum, Dr. Martin. See NAN A 340 B. Carp to Dr. Martin, 3.3.1950 and Carp to the secretary of SWA 26.4.1951.

¹⁰⁹ See especially NAN A 340, Bernard Carp to Heinz Roth 9.5.1951. Roth himself confirmed that they shot at least one animal per day. Interview with Heinz Roth, Windhoek, 18.3.2002.

¹¹⁰ Landau (2002), p. 147.

¹¹¹ Bernard Carp provided Roth with photographic material and a 16mm film. The cameras, a Leica photo camera and a film camera, were contributed by Heinz Roth. Eberhard von Koenen also documented the expedition visually (photographs and film). See NAN A 340 Bernard Carp to Heinz Roth, 17. and 18.5.1951.

¹¹² Edwards (2001), p. 12.

profit.¹¹³ Yet, in the long run uneven patterns of consumption and use emerged, at least with regard to the photographs. While Roth made his images available in a rather narrow space within his private networks and by providing his expedition fellows with photo albums, it was the South Africans and Europeans who successfully used the photographs in publications¹¹⁴ and museums as arenas of public and popular expertise: Dennis Woods displayed the Roth photographs for talks at the Wildlife Protection Association, Bernard Carp did so in a number of lectures he gave at the Transvaal Museum, the Mountain Club in Cape Town, and similar public and semi-public institutions, establishing himself as an expert with entrepreneurial flair.¹¹⁵ Lawrence Green most prominently used the photographs in his widely read book *Lords of the Last Frontier*, published shortly after the tour in 1952. Roth himself tried to commercialize his photographic activity and to establish himself as a professional photographer, yet his hopes of continuing his collaboration with Carp did not materialize.¹¹⁶ This may have been one reason why he decided, by the late 1950s, to offer his photographic skills to the Southwest African administration and ended up taking aerial photographs of the northern border rivers. Much later, in the 1970s, he deposited his photographic collection in various Namibian and European archival institutions, such as the Windhoek Scientific Society and the National Archives of Namibia.¹¹⁷ With their deposition in these institutions, processes of de-contextualisation and re-contextualisation commenced. In the National Archives, the photographs were arranged in a cataloguing system, in which photographs in general are made accessible in a uniform format, material appearance – as black and white positive prints – and numerical order. The photographs of Heinz Roth have been furnished with captions, which synthesized information and knowledge available within the archives and were confined to the identification of white male members of the Carp expedition and often a general attribution of the images to the Kaoko reserve. As in the case of most visual material, the photographs have been separated completely from the written sources. These archiving procedures have further obliterated the inter-relatedness

¹¹³ See NAN A 340, Bernard Carp to Heinz Roth, 9.5.1951. Carp therein also agreed “that a representative collection (of flora and fauna specimen) will be given to the Windhoek museum”, in cases where spare species were available.

¹¹⁴ NAN A 340, Bernard Carp to Heinz Roth, 13.11.1951.

¹¹⁵ NAN A 340 Bernard Carp to Heinz Roth, 13.11.1951.

¹¹⁶ NAN A 340, Bernard Carp to Heinz Roth, 14.3.1950. Carp had e.g. offered Roth the opportunity to join him on a trip to then Southern Rhodesia, but for whatever reason, Roth did not accept.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Heinz Roth, Windhoek, 18.3.2002. It has not been possible up to now to reconstruct archiving strategies in the Namibian institutions mentioned. It seems to have been quite a widespread strategy within the settler community to deposit collections in various institutions. Information given by Werner Hillebrecht, head of the National Archives in Windhoek, March 2003.

of the various documents and their historical conditionality due to specific representational strategies of the colonial state and selected members of the colonial society. Discussing the photographs with residents of Kaoko blurred some of these archival constraints. The identification and naming of individuals, places and sites in the photographs interrupted their confinement to ethnographic and segregation narratives. On the other hand, the photographs were, as we shall see, re-contextualised and attributed new meanings, now within local memory and local historical narratives.

The expedition photographs of Roth roughly followed, as I said, two patterns of representation, an outward gaze and an inward gaze. Within these two strands, various genres come up, a structure suggested not least by the captions accompanying each photograph. “Nature” includes panoramic views of open landscapes or scenery as well as focused framings of waterholes, single trees and selected sections of riversides. While “natives” labels all photographs of local people, be it portraits of individuals or images of groups. On the other hand, the expedition’s journey itself is captured in a variety of ways. Images of single members of the expedition group, vestiges of earlier white presence such as ruins of colonial buildings or monuments, cars, lorries and roads reflecting the trajectories and, not least, hunting photographs are abundant. As will be shown, both visions were deeply interconnected, referring to each other implicitly and explicitly. Nevertheless, they do not amalgamate into a coherent visual narrative on north-western Namibia. Rather these images “reflect” or refer to the complexities of interests, conditions and power relations underlying the photographic occasions they resulted from.

3.2. Visions of gender – nature and natives

The main genre of visually representing nature is landscape. Landscape photographs are images of physical nature or space; they mediate specific visions of the natural world and express value and meaning.¹¹⁸ Heinz Roth’s photographs of space and nature in Kaoko emerged in a post-World War II colonial context, in which Kaoko’s association with particular visions of landscape and its significance as a frontier zone strongly occupied the visual field. Yet, as a colonial periphery, the region remained spatially and territorially disputed and claimed by various agents. It was to these local contests over power to occupy and appropriate space and land – both physically and symbolically – that Roth’s landscape photographs responded.¹¹⁹ As we shall see, the codification of nature and space in these pho-

¹¹⁸ Burke (2003), p. 49; Mitchell (1994), p. 17.

¹¹⁹ David Bunn makes a similar point for landscape images in the Cape Colony in the 1820s, see Bunn, D. (1994), ‘Our Wattled Cot’: Mercantile and Domestic Space in Thomas Pringle’s African Landscapes. In Mitchell, p. 127ff.

tographs was gendered, as they can be “read” as emblems of social and, particularly, gender relations concealed within them.¹²⁰

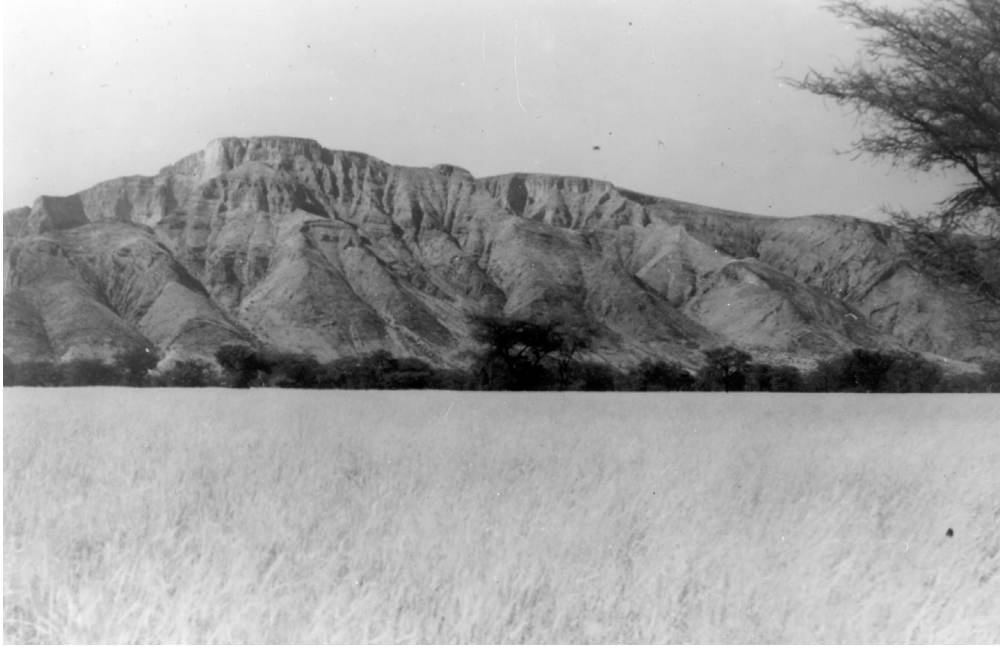


Figure 2: “Mountain range at Sesfontein”

Heinz Roth took a number of panoramic views of open landscapes. In this photograph we see a vast grass plain lying in front of a massive mountain range forming the horizon; in-between a subtle line of trees refers to a river. The grass, the structure of the mountain, the river and parts of a tree on the right hand upper corner lead our eye in an ecliptic movement towards the right hand frame of the image. There are no people, no animals, neither game nor stock, no visible signs of any economic or social activity. It is an empty land, a natural scenery, lying calmly, passively, but wild and untamed in front of the viewer’s eyes, a pristine space, virgin nature unfolding. A vision of a place, which makes viewers forget the presence of the camera, naturalizing the image’s frame by suggesting infinity and openness.¹²¹ Vacant land is a well-known topos in imperial and colonial imagery, visualizing indigenous absence and territorial claims by the colonisers. Colonial spaces appear as willing to be appropriated and occupied by particular minorities, in Southern Africa the settlers, ideally

¹²⁰ Mitchell (1994b), p. 17.

¹²¹ Edwards (2001), p. 120.

the men.¹²² Correspondingly, these images are inflected with gendered discourses – written and visual ones – based on analogies of lands and women as objects of appropriation and control. But this photograph by Roth tells us more; it allows further readings beyond the vision of an idealized disposable, female landscape to be conquered by male physical force. The photograph was taken at Sesfontein on the southern margins of Kaoko and the river flowing through the plains is the Hoanib, which throughout most of the year has a dry river bed, but also permanent underground water-flows and selected sites, where water finds its way to the surface. The Hoanib traverses a huge mountain gorge, the Kowarib, slowly proceeding in a north-western direction before it reaches the plains of Sesfontein and continues westwards down to the Atlantic coast. It roughly delineates the southern border of what was then considered to be the Kaokoveld reserve and the northern edge of the stock-free zone.¹²³ Yet, it also represents the trajectory of north-south migrations as in the early 1950s it was the most common way to reach Kaoko from the south or to leave the reserve to the south. So the photograph is about borders and confinement, and about movement and migration, the poles sketching the frame to the emergence of colonial societies in the northern areas. It is an expression of this discourse, which was predominantly conceived as a male one, affecting “white” and African men in particular. As a representative of the settler society, Roth could celebrate his privilege to move beyond the northern margins of the settler area into a virgin African space, his unrestricted mobility as a member of the colonial elite, and juxtapose it with the limitations placed on the mobility of African men, ideally confined to labour migration. The river has a further meaning, which relates to Roth’s visual representation of Kaoko’s natural resources, mainly water.

“Scenery near Onganga” is one of these images. A variety of vegetation, grasses and trees, mostly the palm-trees follow the course of the riverbed and its peculiar vegetation through stony, rocky lands. The photograph was taken at Onganga, a waterhole on the Hoarusib (Owaruthe) River in central Kaoko. Again there are no people and no animals in the image; it is at first view an image of a natural landscape with palm trees. We may – and should – argue for a romanticized vision of natural beauty, of fragile and peculiar vegetation in a semi-arid surrounding, devoid of any signs of disruption or civilisation. It is an idealized vision eradicating the conflicts and contradictions of colonialism in northern Namibia in the mid-20th century.¹²⁴ Besides an image of a waterhole, it evokes the significance of the appropriation of water resources in Southern African settler societies throughout the 19th

¹²² See Bunn (1994), even though the author does not elaborate a particular gender perspective.

¹²³ Gov. Notice No. 374 of 1947, published in the official Gazette No. 1331 on November 4th 1947, see NAN SWAA 1168, Native Reserve Kaokoveld, Vol. 2, 4.11.1947. Also Miescher (2009), chapter 5.

¹²⁴ For a discussion beyond the Namibian case see Mitchell (1994b), p. 21.



Figure 3: "Scenery near Onganga"

and 20th centuries.¹²⁵ Waterholes and water resources in general were hubs of social and economic life and had a strong symbolic meaning,¹²⁶ both for Africans and settlers. The series of images of Heinz Roth sketches a topography of water sites, which constitutes one matrix of symbolic appropriation of Kaoko as a space. The discursiveness of these photographs emerges from inter-visibility, their cross-reference to other images, earlier photographs and paintings and, more importantly, maps and cartographic sketches. On one of the oldest South African maps of Kaoko, major Manning's map, based on his tours through the region in 1917 and 1919, Onganga is indeed marked as the place of the palm trees on the Hoarusib River. Seen from this angle, the landscape photographs of Roth do place him in a genealogical line of male colonials appropriating Kaoko, not only by military force – as in Manning's case – but increasingly through knowledge¹²⁷ codified in the visual literacy of a genealogy of interdependent images.

3.2.1. *Natives*

Roth's photographs of nature and space are characterized by the absence of Africans. Nevertheless, this absence refers to particular visions of gender and gender relations, enabling Roth as a photographer to reassert himself as a settler and traveller in contrast to African men and women in the reserves. It is indeed in the way he represents women in Kaoko where these references become most striking, as it is women and, particularly female bodies, mediating nature and being at the centre of the settlers' visions of Kaoko as a contained landscape materializing in the post-war period. It is to be noted that, historically, the photographs of Heinz Roth taken during the Carp expedition fell into a period of transition. Kaoko was still considered to be a "nature reserve", in contrast to neighbouring Owambo,¹²⁸ and the shift towards a perception of the region as a "native reserve" was made only gradually.¹²⁹ These parallel ideas did influence Roth's selection and visual documentation of *subjects*.¹³⁰ But there are further ambiguities to be noted. The photographs of residents of Kaoko in the collection of Heinz Roth only partly fit into contemporary visual discourses on Afri-

¹²⁵ See Beinart, W. (2000), African History and Environmental History. *African Affairs*, 99, p. 272.

¹²⁶ Compare Henrichsen (1997), pp. 54ff. for an elaboration of the argument for central Namibia in the 19th century. See also Part I above.

¹²⁷ A similar point is made by Snyder for territorial photography in America in the 1860s and 1870s. See Snyder, J. (1994), Territorial Photography. In Mitchell, pp. 175ff.

¹²⁸ Hayes (2000), Camera Africa: Indirect Rule and Landscape Photographs of Kaoko, 1943. In Miescher & Henrichsen, pp. 53 & 54.

¹²⁹ Miescher & Rizzo (2000), pp. 28 & 29.

¹³⁰ I use the term *sujet* as part of specific systems of representation, which do determine their objects and the way subjects – viewers and others – relate to them. See Solomon-Godeau, A. (2003), Wer spricht so? Einige Fragen zur Dokumentarfotografie. In Wolf, H. et al (eds.), *Diskurse der Fotografie. Fotokritik am Ende des fotografischen Zeitalters*. Vol. II, Frankfurt a.M., p. 72.

can men and women in the colony. This is, not least, due to the fact that the involvement of the men and women in the photographs helped shape the visual output.



Figure 4: "Owahimba women & children, Sesfontein"

At the centre of the image taken in Sesfontein in southern Kaoko, we see a group of women and children gathered close to a hut. In the background there are trees, a few scattered huts and a fence enclosing gardens or stock. To the far right shadowy mountain ranges mark the horizon. On the lower frame of the image a tiny shadow suggests the presence of another person, probably the photographer himself. Neither the women nor the children seem to be involved in any activity. This "lack of action" was characteristic of ethnographic photography of women in Kaoko in the 1930s and 40s. Roth took a whole series of such images, feeding into a repetitive genre and underlining the increasing exposure of women and their bodies to visual intrusion and observation.¹³¹ There is a double repetition in this photograph. First, it relates to the mentioned ethnographic narrative in which women represent idealized signs of cultural continuity, of naturalized corporeality and inscriptions

¹³¹ This increased prominence of women in the visual representation of Kaoko became particularly strong in the 1950s. See Miescher & Rizzo (2000), p. 30.

of a historical past.¹³² As such, culturalised women would guard and mediate the northern frontier.¹³³ It is this ethnography that guaranteed the images' value in a colonial and international consumption space.¹³⁴ Secondly, the repetition lies within the image and is capturing a group instead of a single person. It stresses the de-individualization of these nameless women, representing tribal or ethnographic types rather than single individuals (see caption "Owahimba women").¹³⁵ The staging of this tribal scene is further sustained by the children and the huts, expressing its domestic context. The social identity of the women inscribed through this photograph is a reproductive and sexualized one. It defines their relational status towards African men – via the children and the domestic – and towards male settlers – as objects of sexual fantasies and of scrutinized observation.¹³⁶

The intrusiveness of the camera becomes even more evident in the close-ups of some of the women in the group. Here Roth celebrates the visual mapping of the female bodies, and oversubscribes the scrutiny of his observing eye.¹³⁷ It is this blunt exposure of the power relations positioning the women as passive objects offering themselves to the camera, and Roth as the observer with his privileged control of the colonized body, which makes these images crude. The furtive presence of the photographer on the lower frame of the group image is indeed intended as a signature of his privileged intrusiveness. But what is striking and somehow disturbing about these photographs is that both the group and the single women do not return the gaze. Most of the women and children direct their view towards something or someone beyond the frame of the image. Heinz



Figure 5: "Owahimba women"

¹³² The gendered ethnographic narrative is not restricted to Kaoko but affected most women in the Namibian reserves, even though the respective historical context and chronological outlines may have varied. See Hartmann et al (1998).

¹³³ Hayes (2000), p. 72, makes this point generally for Africans in a culturally undisturbed state.

¹³⁴ Both an inner-Namibian as well as an international audience played a role in the post-war era. See Silvester, Hayes & Hartmann (1998), p. 16. For a more general discussion of the consumption spaces of ethnographic photographs see Tagg (1988), p. 71.

¹³⁵ See Landau (2002), p. 56, who talks of a "double alienation" of women as Africans and as women.

¹³⁶ NAN A 340 Bernard Carp to Heinz Roth, 13.11.1951. Carp therein asks Roth to send him some copies of particular photographs he would like to use in a lecture. He describes one of the photographs in a rather symptomatic manner "Herero girl with Cori (enormous breast)". For a more general discussion of the ways European fantasies of "the Other" were mediated through images of women, see Alloula, M. (1986), *The Colonial Harem*. Minneapolis.

¹³⁷ Tagg, based on Foucault, extensively discusses the function of observing the body as a form of institutional and state control and surveillance. See Tagg (1988), pp. 83ff. My point here is that the observation of female bodies and their visual representation has to be seen both as reflecting male colonial fantasies of female sexuality, and within a context of colonial rule, control and supervision.

Roth himself confirmed that he was indeed not supposed – not allowed – to take these photographs and had hidden his camera while he photographed the women.¹³⁸ There was no photographic occasion in the sense of a negotiation between the photographer and the photographed. The women themselves were observing, from a distance, and probably directed their view towards Carp and his companions. In such a situation their gathering in front of the hut could be interpreted as a performance of collective strength, and as a refusal to enter the visual field. The series of photographs taken by Roth in fact suggests that the photographic occasion took place close to the women, beyond the frame of this photograph, and that it was the men being photographed.



Figure 6: “Headmen of Kaoko Otavi”

“Headmen of Kaoko Otavi” was taken in one of the main residential centres in the midst of Kaoko. The image shows a group of people, mainly men and two women, some of them seated, others standing. The group is gathered close to one of the many scattered trees, structuring the open spaces of stony ground. The frame of this image is open, referring on the left hand side to other people – one person is partly in the image. On the right hand side

¹³⁸ Interview with Heinz Roth, Windhoek, 18.3.2002.

a dog is stepping out of the image. The group of people includes men and women of different ages, all dressed in “European-style” clothes, some of the men wearing suits and hats, the women in long dresses and a cloth arranged around their heads. The engagement of the men and women in the photograph with the camera varied, some of them directly returned the gaze, others were involved in discussions, seemingly ignoring the photographer, others again directed their sight beyond the frame. This variety provides the image with a certain informality or non-staged atmosphere, a snap shot character. The photograph is part of a series Roth took in Kaoko Otavi consisting of portraits of single men, groups of men and groups of women, which all appear in various constellations on several photographs. In a few images they are joined by Bernard Carp and other members of the expedition. The caption of the photograph reads “headmen, Kaoko Otavi”. Photographs of groups of headmen in the reserves were widespread in the post-World War II era.¹³⁹ They contrast with earlier images of single men, such as Vita Tom, who had occupied the visual field as cosmopolitan, powerful individuals owing their strength and influence to various pre-colonial and early colonial resources. The headmen councils, however, very often consisted, as we saw, of men with differing claims of legitimization, yet by the 1940s and 50s most of them drew their authority from the colonial administration. In this context, the photograph of Roth visualized the workings and functioning of an administrative system, which guaranteed the diversification of power structures in the reserves and the emergence of a socially well-off political elite, with access to western commodities. Compared to the visual representation of women, discussed above, such images represented the opposite pole in a narrative, which pretended to modernize African societies without undermining traditional social structures – a change-in-continuity-discourse, which covered both the needs of growing international attention to South Africa’s operations in its Namibian colony and inner-Namibian necessities of remote African frontier spaces.¹⁴⁰ In its visual codification, the headmen, as the African male political counterpart to the colonial administration, mediated African society¹⁴¹ and the reserve as a socially constructed space. It was these men who provided Bernard Carp and his companions with information, with access to particular places and particular people, and with the knowledge required to move through the area safely.¹⁴²

Yet, the photograph somehow averts the evidential force of such interpretation, not least through the presence of the two women on the right hand margin of the image, and its

¹³⁹ Silvester, Hayes & Hartmann (1998), p. 16.

¹⁴⁰ Hayes (2000), p. 61.

¹⁴¹ Hayes (2000), p. 70.

¹⁴² This dependency of Carp and his companions on local interlocutors and supporters, usually members of the local male political elite, is evident in Green’s detailed description of the journey through Kaoko. See Green (1952), pp. 36ff.

strong reference to what lies beyond its frame. The caption of the photograph is misleading, as only some of the men in the photograph were in fact members of the headmen council in 1951. As previously argued the council system, which through the 1940s included a growing number of men representing the various communities in Kaoko, notoriously turned out to be ineffective for administrative purposes. In Kaoko Otavi where the photograph was taken, local power plays and conflicts around access to natural and social resources became particularly virulent in the late 1940s, not least due to deteriorating economic and ecological conditions.¹⁴³ Two main parties opposed each other and, according to the logic of the administration, the conflict was conceived of in terms of the old tribal argument, i.e. as one between Herero and Ovatjimba. Yet, what was at stake locally were questions of political and residential legitimacy going back to the migrations into Kaoko in the early 20th century and increased pressure on settlement options in the reserve, due to colonial intervention in the 1920s and 30s.¹⁴⁴ According to this perspective, the photograph becomes an expression of local politics, of claims by the emerging Herero political elite to localize authority and power. Correspondingly, a vision beyond the frame of the image would refer to that part of the population, labelled as Ovatjimba, which in 1951 was still economically and socially disadvantaged – i.e. had less access to western commodities such as cloth – and had no political representation in the headmen council.¹⁴⁵ Yet, the women in the image raise questions and their repeated appearance on several photographs from the Kaoko Otavi series, in groups of women or together with the men, suggests a social rooting of the group rather than a political-administrative one. This line of argument is supported by oral information and the following identification of individuals in the images. Indeed, the group shows one of those families in Kaoko Otavi, which in the late 1940s and early 1950s was deeply involved in competition over local resources and political control. The most prominent man in the photograph is second from left, Katjitoha Thomas Mutate, who in 1951 had lost his recognition as headman by the colonial administration but who remained one of the leading economic

¹⁴³ See e.g. NAN SWAA 2513, NC Ondangwa to CNC, Inspection Report: Kaokoveld Native Reserve, 10.10.1949 and generally the monthly and annual reports dealing with Kaoko containing information on increasing pressure on natural resources, such as grazing and water, on droughts and famine, and on restrictions to mobility, trade and economic activities within the reserve, archived under NAN SWAA 2513 & SWAA 1168.

¹⁴⁴ Among them particularly the forced removals of inhabitants of southern Kaoko to the central areas. See Parts I and III above.

¹⁴⁵ This was the case up to the late 1940s and early 1950s, when complaints were increasingly raised by the “Ovatjimba” community in Kaoko Otavi, and finally led to the administration implementing their representation in the headmen council. See NAN SWAA 2513, Kaokoveld General, minutes of a headmen meeting at Opuwo, 16.4.1952 and NAO 51 3/8, NC Ondangwa to CNC Windhoek, 3.8.1953. See Friedman (2005), pp. 52–53.

and political figures locally.¹⁴⁶ The woman on the far right is his wife, Jogbeth Inazongara Unomuingo.¹⁴⁷ Viewed from this perspective, the photograph could be interpreted as a local performance of a socially – not tribally – based interest group, which included women, and did use the presence of the camera to visualize their political and residential claims.

3.2.2. *People in their place*

The selection of photographs by Heinz Roth discussed above resulted from a visual engagement of a member of the Namibian settler society with a reserve and its inhabitants in the early 1950s. The photographic settings in which these images were produced were determined both by the power relations defining colonizers and colonized, subjects and objects of vision and representation in a colonial context,¹⁴⁸ and by visual narratives shaping the ways the camera would approach and frame colonial bodies and space. Roth's photographs do enclose these discourses of power and rule, of observation and classification. They mirror the photographer's vision of African life in an African space, as well as his awareness of privileged access to the means of appropriating land and people – both physically and discursively. As such, these photographs easily fed into elite visions of apartheid, providing the settler society with its geographical and symbolic frontiers.

Yet, there was a further ingredient in the visual representation of Kaoko and its African population, namely images showing the expedition members, their cars and other symbols of white presence in the region. These images may have served to construct biographical or personal records, in contrast to the ethnographic and the landscape photographs. Yet, it will be shown that they were part of one and the same project of visual appropriation and representation, that the photographs reflected the internal gaze and constantly referred to the reserve and its people. And that gender identities were visually inscribed, reproduced and enforced. Nevertheless, some of the photographs open up alternative interpretation, as they allow fractured and contested visions of gender to unfold.

3.3. The internal gaze – photographs of the expedition

Roth's images of the expedition visually inscribed a whole range of the settler society's claims to Kaoko. First, they are about the physical and symbolic appropriation of land and

¹⁴⁶ Green describes him as one of the most wealthy men in Kaoko Otavi, owning large cattle herds and big gardens, Green (1952), pp. 50 & 51.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Solomon Hartley, Oruwandjai, 11.1.2002. The women in the photographs were identified by several people present at the interview, yet it was particularly Solomon Hartley's sister, Rahimiz Hartley, who recognized most people in the photographs.

¹⁴⁸ The same argument has been made in more general terms by Martha Rosler, quoted in Solomon-Godeau (2003), p. 69.

natural resources. As shown before, Kaoko had been the target of settler ambitions since the beginnings of colonial rule. Economic activities such as mining, agriculture, hunting and commercial trading, as well as “white” settlement, remained an issue up until the 1930s. Photographs of ruins of abandoned farm houses, of former military and police posts, of vestiges of explorers and adventurers prominently figure in Roth’s series, as they repetitively did in most photographic work on Kaoko from the 1930s onwards.¹⁴⁹ They sketched the settlers’ visual literacy of the landscape and nurtured a spatial structure of the region, identifying the nodes and co-ordinates of “white” trajectories throughout the reserve.



Figure 7: “E. von Koenen with shot springbock”

Yet, there were other forms of penetrating and appropriating African spaces and resources. As shown in this photograph, “white” mobility in the colony in the mid-20th century was ideally and symbolically connected to motor-cars.¹⁵⁰ In the image we see Eberhard von Koenen,

¹⁴⁹ Miescher & Rizzo (2000), p. 36.

¹⁵⁰ A telling example for the significance of modern transport and mobility in settler southern Africa is Larson, Thomas J. (2004), *The Great Adventure. The University of California Southern Africa Expedition of 1947–48*. New York. In contrast to similar literature produced inside the settler society, Larson, as an American, openly distanced himself from the narrow racial narratives of

one of the expedition members, sitting in a jeep. Von Koenen, dressed in leisure clothing, holds up a rifle, to his left is a briefcase. The back of the car is loaded with boxes, probably containing equipment or von Koenen's personal belongings. At the front of the car we see a dead antelope skilfully fixed to the radiator. Cars were symbols and assets of male status and expressions of ruling class identity in Namibia. In the 1950s they were the *sine qua non* of any tour to the northern areas, be it private or official. Indeed, the jeep had been one of the material conditions of von Koenen's participation in the expedition.¹⁵¹ Eventually, it was the cars and lorries that empowered Carp and his companions to conquer and subdue the wilderness of Kaoko.¹⁵² This photograph celebrates male physical force and male control over nature. Cars were part of the ritual of conquest, as much as were arms and cameras, especially when these technologies were brought together in the field of hunting. Photographs of trophy shots, such as the one we see here, were a popular genre of colonial rule and self-representation.¹⁵³ They were symbols of the "white" male elite's claim to a privileged position within colonial space and society, emphasizing their ability to conquer space and exploit the land. The most significant rivals to this elite masculinity were Africans and, particularly, African men. Their absence in this photograph showing von Koenen belies their most probable involvement in the hunt and the arrangement of the trophy on the car. Furthermore, it is an absence negating an African involvement in game management and hunting¹⁵⁴ in the region, their access to arms and trading networks and their knowledge of game stocks.¹⁵⁵

The next photograph is one of those images produced by Roth, which show the members of the expedition involved in leisure and pleasure activities. In the photograph we see Lawrence Green, Bernard Carp, Dennis Woods and Harry Hall (from left to right) having a bath in a waterhole in central Kaoko. All men appear to be more or less naked. Interestingly, the men's reaction to the camera varied; while Carp remained somehow uncomfort-

Apartheid South Africa. His tour led him through Kaoko briefly, where he visited some "Herero villages".

¹⁵¹ NAN A. 340, Bernard Carp to Heinz Roth, 12.3.1951 and Bernard Carp to the Secretary of South West Africa, 26.4.1951.

¹⁵² The celebration of cars in the conquest of wilderness, including cars frequently getting stuck is narratively elaborated by Lawrence Green, another participant in the Carp expedition. See Green (1952). For the significance of driving in a specific construction of control of space, see Henrichsen (2000), p. 168.

¹⁵³ Hayes (1998b), p. 173.

¹⁵⁴ Hayes (1998b), p. 179; and Landau (2002), p. 147.

¹⁵⁵ There is extensive archival documentation dealing with game and game hunting in Kaoko, see e.g. NAN PTJ 1 4/R, Hahn to secretary of South West Africa, 17.5.1926; NAN LAN 36 80, report on Kaokoveld, January 1926, NAN NAO 31 24/13, Kaokoveld Game 1936–1945. For a broader discussion see Beinart, W. (1990), Review Article. Empire, Hunting & Ecological Change in Southern & Central Africa. *Past and Present*, No. 128: 162–86.



Figure 8: "Water hole, Onganga, L. Green, B. Carp, H. Hall, D. Woods"

ably standing in the middle of the pool, Green and Hall protected themselves against the intimacy of the gaze by glancing at each other in a friendly way, Dennis Woods finally immersing his body into the water. Through the image, the waterhole is attributed alternative significance – no more a site of social and political contest – but the locus of ease, pleasure and intimacy. It becomes a place where specific forms of male solidarity and familiarity can be played out, an environment of homosocial enjoyment.¹⁵⁶ We may argue that such tours to the northern areas enabled men to participate in these gendered social relations: homoeroticism, corporal intimacy and unexpected femininity. Captured in their nakedness, the men appear as equals, regardless of any differences in their social and individual identity, willing to merge into a collective ritual of intimate experience. Furthermore, their "nakedness"¹⁵⁷ communicates with those representations of naked bodies in Kaoko, by which Roth de-

¹⁵⁶ Henrichsen (2000), p. 172.

¹⁵⁷ We may conceptualize "nakedness" as one form of "clothing", i.e. the absence of clothes, and relate images of naked "white" settler men to those showing them in female disguise or in African dress. The visuals could thereby be interpreted as specific statements on gender norms and relations, and on the hierarchies of "white" and African "nakedness". For a similar approach to colonial photography on the Orient see Bate, D. (2003), *Fotografie und der koloniale Blick*. In Wolf et al, pp. 115ff.

picted Africans, and particularly women. In the visual cross-reference, the authority of this image lies precisely in the presence of the white men making a visual statement about bodies and race and referring to particular discursive contexts. On the other hand, the image enforces a harmonious leisure activity in an area determined by the daily political, social and economic struggles of its inhabitants, raising the photograph to a representation of elite exclusivity and arrogance of power. This line of argument is reinforced if we compare the photograph with other images of Roth placing the men in harmony within a peaceful environment, in a condition of complete bourgeois ease with themselves and their world. Roth skilfully relied on repertoires of particular interest to the urban-based, cosmopolitan settler elites, such as reading, writing, painting, and “proper” clothing, distinguishing them from uncivilized wild Africans (and Boers) from the bush. Eventually, we see images of Eberhard von Koenen painting, of Lawrence Green meditating, or of the group – dressed for dinner – enjoying their meal near a night time fire.

4. Gendered visions – oral histories around the Roth photographs

The photographs of Heinz Roth and most colonial photography produced in Kaoko were not intended for consumption in the region, but for private and public audiences within the Namibian and Southern African settler societies. Although the Roth photographs were used by various members of the Carp expedition and in various institutions, ending up in a number of Namibian archives, they did not circulate within the region.¹⁵⁸ In 2002 we¹⁵⁹ showed the Roth photographs in a small exhibition in Sesfontein¹⁶⁰ and discussed them with interviewees in Sesfontein and Kaoko Otavi. The aim was to identify people and places on the photographs and to find out more about the photographic occasions these images resulted from. Furthermore, questions of circulation and accessibility of images in the region and the role of photographs in local personal archives were raised. Central to discussions with women and men living in Kaoko was that interviewees used the photographs as points of departure from which to comment and reflect on normative narratives, on the role of visual representation in recording and representing the past, and to place themselves in particular contexts. Two points are of importance here. Firstly, showing the Roth photographs to resi-

¹⁵⁸ None of the men and women, we interviewed, nor those who visited the exhibition in Sesfontein in 2001 and 2002 had seen the Roth photographs before.

¹⁵⁹ My colleague, Giorgio Miescher and Joshua Touro, teacher at the Elias Amxab secondary school in Sesfontein.

¹⁶⁰ The photographs were exhibited in one of the classrooms of the Elias Amxab secondary school in Sesfontein. The organization and opening of the exhibition was supported by Joshua Touro and the regional councillor and pastor Theodore Hendriks.

dents of Kaoko who would have had personal relationships to the people in the images,¹⁶¹ or would know places and sites Roth had captured with his camera, does not mean that the images were reset to an “original” context. It is a re-contextualization, a re-framing of the visual material in new and alternative interpretations, a further chapter in the social lives¹⁶² of these photographs. It is not a point of closure, but one of opening. Secondly, the aim is not to juxtapose a visual narrative on the past with an oral one.¹⁶³ Neither do the photographs of Roth simply deliver historical evidence, or information given during the interviews necessarily correspond with knowledge of the past.¹⁶⁴ Using the photographs in interviews was about exploring the potential of images to take on various meanings. An exposure of the Roth images to debates in the region, even though rather limited by the interview situation, opened up ways to alternative – not authentic – “readings” and to reflections both on the contingencies and on the hierarchies of different forms of representing the past.

Missionary Heinrich Vedder took a number of photographs in Kaoko Otavi during his stay in 1914 and published some of them in 1928 in “The Native Tribes of South West Africa”. This book is an example of how images used in interviews become representational resources in a context of conflicting visions of the past and in attempts to have particularly male individuals recognized in historical accounts.

In the centre of the image we see three men, two of them wearing leather clothing and necklaces, the third one with a jacket and a hat. One of the men is “identified” in the caption as “Tjimba headman”. This photograph was not part of the collection we showed during the interviews, but emerged as a photocopy in the course of our discussions with some men in the place.¹⁶⁵ One of the main issues in these interviews had been conflicts in Kaoko Otavi emerging in the aftermath of the above-mentioned immigration to the region from southern Angola in the late 1910s and 1920s. In Kaoko Otavi the immigrants met an impover-

¹⁶¹ We only met one person in Sesfontein who identified himself on one of the Roth photographs.

¹⁶² The term is taken from Pinney, Ch. (1997), *Camera Indica: the social life of Indian photographs*. London.

¹⁶³ The interrelation of various forms of narrating the past is a prominent issue in historiography, mostly concerning the construction of written versus oral historiographies. See e.g. Tonkin (1986); Hofmeyr, I. (1994), ‘*We spend our years as a tale that is told*’. *Oral historical narrative in a South African chiefdom*. London, introduction; White, Miescher & Cohen (2001). Visual sources have only recently been included into these debates. For a discussion see e.g. Mitchell (1994b), introduction; and Hayes & Bank (2002), introduction.

¹⁶⁴ For a critique of information obtained through interviews see Giles-Vernick, T. (2001), *Lives, Histories, and Sites of Recollection*. In White, Miescher & Cohen, pp. 195ff.

¹⁶⁵ The work of missionary Heinrich Vedder is quite popular in central Kaoko and people often rely on Vedder and other authors, such as government anthropologist N.J. van Warmelo, to underline their argument. On another occasion, an interviewee showed us a photocopy of a drawing C.H.L. Hahn had done of Vita Tom in the late 1930s as part of an obituary notice. Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002.

ished population, which had begun to recover from decades of extended raids in the region and was slowly building up herds again.¹⁶⁶ Yet, this process of repastoralization was interrupted by the arrival of well-armed immigrants with comparatively large herds of animals. It eventually led to the expulsion of the old political elite by invading young men who,¹⁶⁷ in engaging

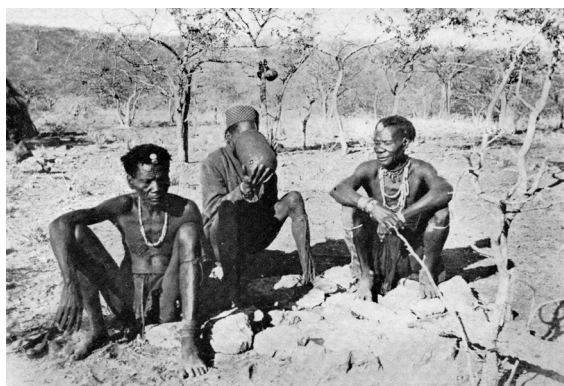


Figure 9: "Tjimba headman (Otavi) tasting milk"

with Portuguese colonialism in southern Angola, had built up political, social and economic capital and managed to take over control in their new place of residence.¹⁶⁸ In the consolidation of their claim to local power, they skilfully used options resulting from the gradual establishment of a colonial administration in the region. During South African colonialism these conflicts over diverging historical experiences, economic inequalities and local political control were transformed into inter-ethnic rivalry, resulting in an antagonistic discourse of Ovatomjimba subordination and Herero rule. In contemporary debates over the past and in post-independence power plays within Kaoko, these issues continue to play an important role.

The collection of Roth photographs produced in 1951 exclusively considered members of the so-called Herero elite, such as the above-mentioned Katjitotha Thomas Mutate. The images reflected an uneven access to the colonial state, to the settler society and to forms of representation within colonial Kaoko, both written and visual.¹⁶⁹ The showing of a copy of the photograph by Vedder and the related statement quoted above challenged the dichotomies and hierarchies framing visions of politics, identity and ethnicity. In contrast to perceptions and representations of so-called Ovatomjimba as that group in Kaoko Otavi, which had no access to European commodities or to economic wealth, education and political power,¹⁷⁰ the

¹⁶⁶ See Part II chapter 3 above.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette, 9.1.2002 and 7.5.2002.

¹⁶⁸ For a brief summary and for oral traditions on life in southern Angola and the immigration to Kaoko see Bollig (1997), Introduction.

¹⁶⁹ Tjongoha and his generation of political leaders in Kaoko Otavi do not figure by name in the archival documents on Kaoko kept in the National Archives in Windhoek. In Vedder's chapter on "Tjimba" in Kaoko in "The Native Tribes of South West Africa" (Fourie et al 1928) he is mentioned as "headman" and photographed, but not identified individually.

¹⁷⁰ Hartmann (1902/03); and Kuntz (1912), p. 206; Vedder (1928).

photograph of 1914/1928 could be used by the male interviewees as a visual enforcement of their oral representation of the past. It became an image blurring dominant narratives, which conceptualize the history of Kaoko Otavi in ethnic terms and along the axis of rulers and ruled. Starting from the photograph, the men would unfold male genealogies, explaining the immigrations to the area as a result of family networks to which the rival men belonged and understanding the political power plays as the result of generational rather than ethnic conflict.¹⁷¹ The existence of a photograph of Tjongoha (also known as Hinunu), taken by one of the most prominent missionaries in South West Africa and published in various books¹⁷² and his identification as “Tjimba headman” made him a relevant historical agent who, not least, stood for an early engagement with visual forms of self-representation.¹⁷³

In contrast to this use of the photographs within discourses of male political control and legitimacy, the images opened up further alternative readings. Beyond the narratives of big men and political careers, they initiated reflections on the ambiguities of these prominent male figures. The women particularly used the photographs to question the status and popularity of headmen and chiefs, both in the past and in current historical debates. As we saw earlier, their experiences with and perceptions of an increasing centralization of power and the involvement of male members of the community in colonial policies, led to shifts in the social organization of gender.¹⁷⁴ The women interviewed stressed increasing control over their mobility, their labour and their reproductive functions.¹⁷⁵ The re-intensification of raids in Kaoko caused by the immigrations from southern Angola put young women at particular risk as they were one of the targets of these disrupting assaults.¹⁷⁶ The photographs

¹⁷¹ Interview with Ngakurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002, Interview with David Humu, Kaoko Otavi, 12.1.2002.

¹⁷² The same photograph is reproduced in Miescher & Rizzo (2000), p. 21.

¹⁷³ A similar argument could be developed with regard to Uerimunga Adam Kasaona, one of the headmen in Sesfontein, who was repeatedly photographed by Heinz Roth in 1951. When we showed the photographs of Kasaona in Sesfontein and surroundings in 2001/2002, memories of the man – including praise songs, organized visits to the grave etc. – were revitalized and the photographs were enthusiastically circulated among the community.

¹⁷⁴ Debates on women/gender and colonialism have increasingly stressed the need to differentiate within entities such as “women”, instead of reproducing rigid categorizations. For a brief overview see Gallagher, A.-M., Lubelska, C. & Ryan, L. (2001), *Re-Presenting the past. Women and History*. Essex, pp. 122ff.; Allman, J., Geiger, S., Musisi, N. (2002), *Women in African Colonial Histories*. Bloomington, introduction. It is important to note here that most women we interviewed were young when men such as Vita Tom and Thomas Mutate established themselves in Kaoko. Their status as young women made them particularly vulnerable both to colonial rule and to pressure coming from the male elite within the local society. For an elaborated discussion of gender and age see McKittrick (1998).

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Kainaa Menjengua Tjihero, Kaoko Otavi, 8.1.2002, Interview with Mariro Koviti Tjurura, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002.

¹⁷⁶ Interviews done suggest that the raids in the 1910s and 20s affected the women in central Kaoko

of prominent men became emblematic of early colonial male rule and the privileging of men within colonial society. The absence of identified individual women from the visual field – as in most colonial representations of Kaoko¹⁷⁷ – mirrors an ideological programme and their gradual assignment to the domestic and reproductive sphere, to the role of collective representatives of “tribal” life bound to the reserve.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the analogy between political and economic status and visual performance of men such as Vita Tom was questioned and challenged by reconstructing strategies of women in the 1920s and 1930s to acquire wealth and social status beyond colonial structures such as the administration, the military or the mission.¹⁷⁹

Ambiguities of discourses on the role of women and their historical experiences in colonial Kaoko developed around various photographs, such as the portrait of a woman near Kaoko Otavi.¹⁸⁰ She was riding a donkey and was part of a group including a man and another woman, with the second woman on foot. In the interviews this image was used to take up issues of gender and mobility, ownership of horses and donkeys, and reasons for travelling within and beyond Kaoko. The comment on the image quoted above reflects a point made both by men and women who defined riding and long-distance mobility as a male activity, or confined it to groups living in other areas. Indeed, throughout the colonial period, mobility had been gradually restricted. Colonial policy tried to confine men to labour migration and to prevent the migration of women. Travel permits issued to women in the 1930s and 40s usually named private reasons, such as medical examinations or funerals as the reason for travelling¹⁸¹ and only a few men left the region to look for work.¹⁸² Furthermore, con-

more than women living in the southern parts of Kaoko, such as the Sesfontein area.

¹⁷⁷ There is indeed a methodological and theoretical problem with the absence/presence dichotomy with regard to colonial discourses on women and gender. See Walker (1990), introduction; Woodward et al (2002), pp. xxivff.

¹⁷⁸ For a broader and differentiating Namibian perspective see Krüger, G. (1996), *The Men Should Marry: Koloniale Herrschaft, Geschlechterkonflikte und gesellschaftliche Rekonstruktion im Waterberg Reservat, Namibia. Werkstatt Geschichte*, 14, Nr. 5: 22–36; Hayes (1998a).

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Kvairani Kavari, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002 & 6.5.2002, interview with Jiraeua Tjihoto, Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002.

¹⁸⁰ Three photographs of the woman are kept in the National Archives of Namibia, collection of photographs No. 2983, 2984, 2985. Besides the portrait discussed here, one image shows her as part of a group of three people and the third one is a profile portrait, with a slight physiognomic touch.

¹⁸¹ This point is made with some caution, as there is gender differentiation with regard to passes issued, but there are some specifications when it comes down to reasons for mobility such as labour migration, medical treatment etc.. Some cases of individual women applying for passes and permits to leave Kaoko are archived. See NAN NAO 29 24/16, permits and passes Kaoko 1930s, therein e.g. magistrate Outjo, 24.11.1937; NAN SWAA 2513, additional NC of SWA to Chief NC, 24.6.1939; NAN NAO 28, Kaokoveld General Vol. 2, on a case of female migration in 1935.

¹⁸² See e.g. NAN 19, NC Owamboland, monthly report October, labour migration of men to farms in



Figure 10: "Woman with child (Herero), on donkey"

"The woman is not from our place. Women did not ride on horses in those days", Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002

structions of static African societies in the reserves and a particular reluctance of inhabitants of Kaoko to engage with “modern life” – i.e. with labour migration¹⁸³ – increasingly fed into the implementation of restricting laws. Colonial policies led to uneven options and various forms of moving and travelling in the region, and gender was but one factor determining them. The reference to women from other areas in the interviews may be interpreted as the local re-production of a normative discourse on women. Yet, it also reflected different experiences depending *inter alia* on residence. Southern Kaoko and particularly places like Sesfontein, neighbouring the settler area, had closer access to labour options, trading partners, commercial commodities and to donkeys, the most widespread transport means in the 1950s. In spite of compulsory intervention and hindering by the colonial administration, mobility and trade in southern Kaoko seemingly continued to be an option more than in other areas of the region.¹⁸⁴ Correspondingly, most interviewees suggested that the woman on the photograph originated from Sesfontein.¹⁸⁵ In a local context, the photograph of Roth unintentionally opened up counter-narratives to exclusive “white” mobility in the region and enabled interviewees to engage with a social history of African mobility enabling gendered visions of female mobility to emerge. The women we interviewed in fact concentrated less on the donkey than on the woman’s appearance, her clothing, the child, and the caption to the photograph, labelling her as “Herero” woman. Repeatedly stating that it was by far “traditional” Herero dress in 1951, they questioned the ethnic classification model, which would turn daily dress into a cultural marker.¹⁸⁶ In contrast, the women would stress the quality of the cloth and the socio-economic significance of European-style dress in Kaoko in the 1950s. Access to cloth and similar consumption assets had become increasingly difficult due to, not least, a question of availability of cash. In this view, the photograph of Heinz Roth referred to a particular form of mobility, namely a social one, and the woman on the photograph was first of all someone considered to be wealthy.¹⁸⁷ The clothing style of the woman, her appearance as a whole, induced the interviewees to place the image in the contexts of education and Christianisation, of independent local churches and resulting

the Outjo district, 3.11.1933, NAN SWAA 2513, Officer in Charge Opuwo, monthly report June, 5.7.1943

¹⁸³ On these debates see e.g. NAN NAO 19, NC Owamboland, annual report 1932, n.d.; NAN NAO 28, Kaokoveld general, Vol. 2, NC Owamboland to Sgt. Cogill, 13.9.1932.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Helena Ganuses, Sesfontein, 15.9.2001, interview with Aletha Awises, Sesfontein 19.12.2001; for a comparison with northern Kaoko, see Bollig (1998a).

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Uetjipuraije Hiatjivi, Onjette/Kaoko Otavi, 9.1.2002, interview with Salomon Hartley, Oruwanjai, 11.1.2002, interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002, interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002.

¹⁸⁶ Hayes (1998b), p. 178.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Emily Kazombaruru Kavari, 9.1.2002, interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002.

social options for women. European-style clothes would then suggest access to a Christian context, which in the early 1950s was still less bound to missions than to a social network of independent evangelists and teachers in the region, supplying the congregations not only with religious services, but also with products and goods not available locally.¹⁸⁸

4.1. Gender & visibility – using photographs in history

Historical photographs are visual enunciations on the past. They can be interpreted as documents, as material products resulting from a social interaction, or an encounter between photographers and photographed at a particular moment in time. Yet, it is an asymmetric relationship, dictating the terms under which subjects gain access to the means of production and representation and objects are constituted within particular knowledge regimes. Heinz Roth used his privileged status as a member of the Namibian settler society entering a northern native reserve and the technology of the camera to unfold his vision of Kaoko and its African population. At the same time, Roth positioned himself as a “white” man in relation to African men and women, reproducing and reinforcing the political and social organization of colonial Namibia, increasingly coming under pressure in the post-World War II period.

In this closing section I have examined the historical relevance of Heinz Roth producing photographs, rather than written accounts, of his journey to Kaoko and how the field of documentation and representation was captured by his camera. I have argued that colonial photography in Kaoko, as it developed during the first half of the 20th century, was bound to the dynamics of colonial appropriation and control of a region and a society, which was gradually being transformed by the needs of an emerging colonial state. It is this context of production that patterned the images thus making them meaningful and legible to their intended local and international audiences. Photographs would function as ever-realistic, authentic and immediate signs of a genuine African space, which increasingly threatened to disappear behind the veils of modernity and African emancipation. Nevertheless, the photographs of Roth do not merge into a coherent narrative of colonialism and apartheid, they are ambiguous, uncontained in their many-layered meanings, historically suggestive but not clear. It is this ambiguity and openness of the images, which conceals the agency of the photographed, the men and women returning the gaze of Roth and his camera. Indeed, historical photographs, both as material objects and as forms of representation, can be understood as contested grounds of social interaction raising questions about the accessibility and the use of the medium by the various agents involved. The photographic occasions from which

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Kainaa Menjengua Tjihero, Kaoko Otavi, 8.1.2002, Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002.

the photographs of Heinz Roth emerged depended not least on gender relations framing the moment of production. The vulnerability of women in front of the camera, their exposure to visual scrutiny and objectification mirrored their increased marginalization in colonial Kaoko by the mid-20th century. The imposition of the camera simultaneously reflected back the resistance of the subject to the photographic lens. The hierarchies underlying the production of the photographs continued to affect their circulation and consumption. The photographs of Heinz Roth travelled through time and space, moving between private and public consumption spaces, but always remaining beyond the borders of Kaoko. It is the history of de-contextualisation and dominance of colonial interpretation, their closure within the shallows of the archive, which creates the need to re-contextualise historical photographs in local, oral narratives about the past.

Parts of an earlier version of this chapter have been published as an article about colonial photography in Kaoko as Rizzo (2005).

Epilogue

This thesis has considered Kaoko's history between the late 19th and the mid-20th century. Subscribing to an approach, which aims at transcending colonial perceptions and representations of the north-western Namibian area, I have treated the region not as a self-evidential socio-political and geographical space, but have sought to interpret it against the backdrop of the historical dynamics determining its emergence as a reserve in Namibia, first under German and then South African rule. The transformations of the region's local communities under colonialism have been conceived of in terms of the constitution of a *colonial society*, defined less by race than, rather generically, by its political and socio-economic organization. The main interest, which allowed me to question ethnic and tribal narratives of colonial representation, was to explore and investigate the changes in gender relations and in the ways gender has been constituted, ideologically and symbolically. In this analysis I have remained cautious not to understand colonialism as the sole motor of social change, or to privilege colonialism as the main factor determining political and economic developments. Instead, the significance of local settings, of local agents and their concerns, of their leeway, which persisted despite either the growing presence and intervention by the colonial administration in the region, or emerged as new options, have been recovered. In this, I have, demonstrated how ambivalent, discontinuous and fractured the colonial appropriation and penetration of the north-western region remained up until the late 1930s. At the same time and to some extent, albeit the fact that Africans in Kaoko had their say in the negotiation of what colonialism in their area would entail and mean, the repercussions of South African rule were – in the long run – highly problematic for the region. Economic isolation, social and political marginalization and, eventually, the commodification of Kaoko and parts of its population as a consumption asset for “white” Southern African elites and as a scientific curiosity at best, fully unfolded during the period after World War II. The implications of these developments continue to resonate today.

Throughout the thesis, I have examined problems resulting from the discursive organization of archival documentation and have explored the ways in which oral knowledge might challenge the logic of the colonial archive, conceding that they don't necessarily change it. Some general and, I would say, characteristic problems of the colonial sources on Namibia persisted. As mentioned repeatedly, the tribal bias in these archives is very strong and, by the mid 1920s, the South African officers authoring reports on developments in the regions notoriously organized their representations according to the logic of tribal identity.

Consequently, any person, place and even animal was identified according to its ethnic classification. Historical agents appear as 'Herero man', 'Damara woman'; reserves, locations and eventually homelands determined the filing system of documents leading to what was supposed to constitute a coherent body of information on "the Kaokoveld reserve". Any movement of commodities from and to Kaoko was narrated in terms of "Ovahimba stock", "Ovatjimba tobacco", or "Owambo alcohol" crossing the borders. Reading *against the grain* in order to recover the biographies of individuals, the political and social transformations affecting particular communities, or simply in order to try to identify men and women by name and trace their trajectories in the archives remained an almost insuperable problem.

Quantitative analyses – of trade, of production, of labour recruitment, of demographic shifts, etc. – were almost impossible for the period before the late 1930s. This significantly contrasts colonial administration in Kaoko with experiences in neighbouring Owambo where, for example, the system of labour migration necessarily implied the production of at least basic quantitative data and from data in the former reserves in central Namibia, which provides both earlier and more coherent information on issues such as agricultural production. The South African administration only began to conduct censuses in Kaoko in the late 1920s, although these lacked any systematic method for at least another decade. It was not until the inoculation campaigns in the late 1930s that the state was forced to operate statistically, and compiled samples of livestock numbers and numbers of stock owners; indeed, this was one reason why these campaigns became so important for the constitution of colonial administration in the area. In many instances the analyses had to remain suggestive, recovering plausibilities, and developing qualitative interpretations rather than reconstructing quantitative shifts and changes.

The thesis opens up new fields of inquiry, which require further in-depth research. The violent confrontations between the German colonial government and African communities at Grootberg in 1898 is a subject which deserves further research as it confounds the narrow perception of an ethnic organization of anti-colonial resistance in Namibia in the late 19th century. In a similar vein, the expropriations, deportations and killings of the local leadership in Sesfontein in 1904, which in this thesis were addressed mainly through the narratives of the colonial archive, require further collections of oral knowledge in and beyond Kaoko. This would allow for a significant contribution to a social history of the colonial war of 1904–7 in Namibia, and invigorate a historiographical debate, which has tended to lose itself in static dichotomies.

From a perspective of a regional history of the north-western area, the systematic analysis of court records, both those produced by the legal bodies of the regional and central government, appears to me as a task imposing itself. The chapter on *gender & colonial*

law has dealt in depth with only one criminal case in Kaoko under South African rule. A comprehensive study of the “coming of the law”, to use a current phrase once again, and its implications for processes of gendered conflict resolution, would allow for a more nuanced history of legal cultures under colonialism than I have been able to develop here. Such a study should preferably transcend the dichotomy of customary and colonial law, as the problematic distinction between formal sectors or spheres of the colonial system and informal ones has been a methodological and theoretical challenge throughout the thesis. This is perhaps largely so because Africans seldom made these distinctions and have instead merged experiences and various options into a complex repertoire of daily strategies of conflict resolution, social reproduction and welfare. The case of the Rhenish Mission Society’s tentative and eventually rather limited endeavours in Kaoko was a further case in point. While scholarly work has up until now stressed the marginality of mission work and the historical recentness of church influence in Kaoko, the involvement of the region’s inhabitants in networks of independent churches and the complex forms of appropriation of mission and church work remain dramatically neglected for Kaoko, not least regarding their significance in the emergence of a tiny, but very mobile, local elite of educated African men and women. Some traces of these can be recovered in the archives, and a few letters or notes written in Otjiherero, Afrikaans and a few even in English testify to the dynamics of literacy in the region reaching back to the late 19th century. Furthermore, these scattered testimonies of African narratives raise questions about the appropriation of modern technologies. Besides the written word and the book, we have to include photography – as well as the trajectories of writings and images and eventually raise questions about the existence of personal archives in Kaoko itself. Tracing local cultures of documentation, representation and conservation would for sure signify a fundamental critique and challenge to colonial and metropolitan claims to discursive control and hegemony.

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Interviews

All interviews were done together with Giorgio Miescher. Translations in Sesfontein were done by Joshua Tourobo, Lucretia Kapetua and Florentia Kasaona. Translations in Kaoko Otavi were done by Fanuel Muharukua. All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed in Windhoek by Silvia Katjepunda and Jenny Claassen.

Sesfontein & Warmquelle

- Interviews with Louda //Hawaxas, Sesfontein, 17.12. & 28.12.2001.
- Interview with Fanuel //Hawaxab, Sesfontein, 28.12.2001.
- Interview with August Kasaona, Sesfontein, 20.1.2002.
- Interview with Mathäus Karutjaiva, Sesfontein, 27.12.2001.
- Interview with Alfred Nai-Khaib, Sesfontein, 21.12.2001.
- Interview with Christina Awos, Sesfontein, 17.9.2001.
- Interview with Christina Awos, Sesfontein, 21.12.2001.
- Interview with Samuel Ganuseb, Sesfontein, no date.
- Interview with Abraham /Awa-Eiseb, Sesfontein, 19.12.2001.
- Interview with Abraham /Awa-Eiseb, Sesfontein, 19.12.2001.

Interview with Tobias Kaisuma, Warmquelle, 24.12.2001.

Interview with Helena Ganuses, Sesfontein, 15.9.2001,

Interview with Aletha Awises, Sesfontein 19.12.2001

Kaoko Otavi (with Onjette and Oruwandjai)

Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002.

Interview with Nandu Tom Ndjai, Kaoko Otavi, 9.5.2002.

Interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Kaoko Otavi, 3.1.2002.

Interview with Jarerua Tjihoto, Kaoko Otavi, 6.5.2002.

Interview with Ngakurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 7.1.2002.

interview with Ngangurupe Koviti, Kaoko Otavi, 15.5.2002.

Interview with Mbatambauka Rutjindo Tjavara, Kaoko Otavi/Onjette, 10.1.2002.

Interview with Maririro Koviti Tjihurura, Kaoko Otavi, 4.1.2002.

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